

The Sprout



The newsletter for North Hinksey & Botley

Issue 125 March 2018

The Sprout

Issue 125, March 2018

Contents

3 Letters to the Editor	29 Planning Applications
7 Planet Friendly Power	31 Farewell, Sobell shop
11 Primary Playmakers	33 Flood Relief Channel
13 West Way update	37 2nd Botley Brownies
17 Ahh! Coffee!	39 Easter C of E services
21 Community Vision for Play	41 Favours Auction
25 #botleyfirst	42 Randoms
27 North Hinksey Art Group	43 Local Organizations

From the Editor

Spring is on the way, though as I type this my fingers are stiff with cold! The snowdrops on the cover come from Jenny Holloway, souvenir of a memorable visit to Waterperry. Inside you'll find the usual West Way update from WWCC (p13) which this month is supported by a letter from the Sprout Directors, who are concerned by the way safeguards have been dropped to get the project moving. The Flood Relief Scheme is also giving some cause for concern (p33), but there is comfort at the top of the hill, where NHPC is getting help from the Vale with unlocking some of the potential of our playing field (p21). This will be explained at the Annual Parish Meeting on 22nd March, our once-a-year chance to tell the PC what we would like from them, so there's a date for our diaries. If you're looking for a greener power supply, now's the time to act (p7); if you want to unlock the artist inside you, see p27 for an account of N Hinksey Art Group. If you're a secret poet, or simply missing our much loved local charity shop, see page 31. And finally, Botley too may have its share of fake news. Don't be fooled by the article on page 25!

Ag MacKeith

Letters to the Editor

Annual Parish Meeting

Just a line to urge people to attend if they can the Annual Parish Meeting on 22nd March to hear about the work of our Parish Council over the last year. Parish councillors work hard and give their time voluntarily – they deserve our support and appreciation. The Parish Council is an important consultee on major issues that concern us all and will continue to be so. Looking to the year ahead we see the development of the West Way precinct, the possible broadening of the A34 and the effect of the flood alleviation channel on the fields adjoining North Hinksey Lane and Village, to name but three. The Parish Council can be the spearhead for making sure that residents' views are heard, but to do this they need to know what residents' views are, and they won't find out if we all stay at home on March 22nd.

Janet Godden

Flood Channel

Please thank Debbie Dance for her article in last month's *The Sprout* on the proposed flood channel. Being a life long resident of North Hinksey and living a lot of it overlooking 'the big field', I am appalled by the plan and even more so learning that it will encourage building on the flood plain, rather than the opposite which I had thought until now. It is heart-breaking to walk the proposed route and see the trees marked for felling and the channel pegged out. I shall have to find a new dog-walking area. Has the 'ecologist' realised yet the effect this will have on wildlife, which has used this as sanctuary from all the other new buildings which should have never passed planning.

Jean Rivers

Seeking Ferddie

I was born in Oxford 1948, and I am doing some research on my family history and there is a connection with Botley.

During the 1950s and 60s a friend of my father lived in a converted railway carriage which was in the Elms Rd/ Poplar Rd/ Hazel Rd/ Seacourt Rd area and I am trying to find anybody who might remember this unusual dwelling. I remember going there for Sunday tea as a small boy!

The person, who I only knew as 'Uncle Ferddie', was a great friend of my family, but sadly all contact was lost a long time ago. I realize that this is a long shot, but I thought it was worthwhile asking to see if you might have any information, or know of any other places that I might go to further my enquiries.



Tony Broom

[Does anyone remember Uncle Ferddie, or the railway carriage, if so, let us know and we'll pass it on? That's him, second from left. Editor]

A letter from the Sprout directors

Anxious as we all now are to see the new shopping centre in being, and realising that the appearance of the site will have to get worse before it begins to get better, it would nevertheless be a mistake to take on board every proposed change to the plans that comes along. Some of these changes may not be to our advantage.

West Way Community Concern are monitoring progress on behalf of us all, and their website is a good way to keep up to date. We already know about the Botley Development Company's proposals to change the access to West Way, in a way that will reduce the amount of green space. We have seen how forlorn and boarded up the old precinct looks – still without a firm date for work to start, and reducing even further our local affordable housing, a topic in the news every day. As everywhere locally, there is a shortage of affordable housing in Botley, but the District Council's response has been to permit this development to be exempt.

Now we learn from WWCC that the Vale Council has decided to waive two important conditions in the original contract – BDC is no longer required to secure an agency to take over the management of the student flats, or to provide evidence of the financial viability of the development as a whole. These were the community's main safeguards against the failure of the whole scheme, and they have gone. It is hard to see what evidence of 'progress' the Vale has as a basis for this decision. It profits the developer, obviously, but where is the advantage for Botley?

lanet-friendly power may cost less than you think

A big new campaign is challenging people in and around Oxford to become leaders in support for clean renewable energy. **The Oxford Big Clean Switch** has been launched to make it easy for us all to switch to green energy tariffs. Over 70% of people in the UK are 'very' or 'fairly' concerned about climate change. Yet just 2.5% of homes buy their electricity from a 'green supplier', even though the costs are now similar or even cheaper.

The Oxford Big Clean Switch is being launched by local environmental groups working with the national Big Clean Switch programme. It's one of the first community-led projects in the UK. The project has a website – **www.bigcleanswitch.org/oxford** – where residents can compare the price of different renewable tariffs. It takes less than 10 minutes to get a quote and switch.

For an average hom in Oxford, the cheapest green tariffs available through the campaign are now within £35 to £45 of the very cheapest tariffs on the market, and up to £300 cheaper than the average standard tariff with one of the country's Big Six suppliers .

Alison Hill of Low Carbon Oxford North said, "**We want Oxford to be the place where more people use green energy than anywhere else.** We have a high level of renewable energy generation with over 30 schools across the county and a growing number of businesses installing solar power systems. Let's build on that by using more renewable power as well. Switching to renewable electricity is critical if we're to prevent the worst impacts of climate change, but most people don't realize it could also save them money. Now is the time to make the change. Visit the website and see what is on offer."

The campaign does not promote any single company and offers a choice of tariffs from six different companies. If you like your quote, completing the switch application just takes another few minutes. After that, just sit back and relax – you don't even need to contact your old supplier. Your switch should go live about three weeks later (you'll just need to provide a meter reading to your new supplier at that point).

The project will also raise funds for local environmental projects. The groups running the project will give out the money received as commission as grants to community groups.

Q. What is a clean tariff?

A. When you're on a clean tariff, your supplier promises to match the amount of electricity you use by putting the same amount of renewable electricity into the National Grid. The more renewable electricity that goes into the Grid, the greener it gets.

Q. Which sources of energy are covered by a clean tariff?

A. Big Clean Switch uses 'clean' energy as shorthand for power from renewable sources – sun, wind, water (river dams, tidal or wave power) and biofuels (such as gas released by rotting food or energy crops). The environmental impact is less clear with some forms of biofuels, so these are excluded from the tariffs available through the Big Clean Switch. You can find out more on the website

Q. What kind of savings may be available?

1. A typical saving of c.£300 was calculated on 6 February 2018 by comparing an average usage dual fuel household on a Big Six Standard Variable Tariff (£1,135) with the cheapest dual fuel tariff supplying 100% renewable electricity available through the Big Clean Switch website (£834). All prices are for a single rate meter paying by monthly direct debit, with prices averaged across all regions of England, Scotland and Wales. Average usage as defined by Ofgem is 12,000 kWh pa of gas and 3,100 kWh pa of electricity.
 2. The cheapest open market tariff for an Oxfordshire postcode on 13 February 2018 was £802 a year for a medium consumption dual-fuel household on a single-rate meter paying by monthly direct debit. This compares with £844 a year for the cheapest comparable tariff available through the Oxford Big Clean Switch.
- Chris Church**

Cumnor Choral Society
celebrates its 60th Anniversary with

Four Coronation Anthems
Handel

The Hurst Sinfonia
Conductor Peter Foster

Saturday 24 March 2018
7.30pm
SS Peter and Paul, Botley

Ticket includes
60th Anniversary programme and
refreshments with wine after concert
Adult £12, concession £10, child/student £2
available from Caroline Cockman
cockman.caroline@gmail.com
Charitable Incorporated Organisation 1165970

5ZM's Primary Playmakers' Workshop January 2018

The people who came from the Oxford Playhouse were called Paul and Renata. On the first day we went into the hall and met them. First they told us their names and asked us to say our names, but in a certain way. They said we had to tell them our name and then do a little action with it, like a jump or something.

Later, we got into groups and Paul or Renata would say an object. Then we had to make that object with our bodies, like if they said "house" then one of us might have been the roof and someone else might have been the rest of the house.



Next we mimed robbing a house and had to "steal" three valuable items such as a TV or jewellery. We were in pairs. Once we had practised miming we sat down by the stage and one pair at a time acted it out to the rest of the class. After we had mimed, the other children and normally Paul and Renata gave us feedback.

We played a game called "walkies". What happened was Paul gave us actions or people to be e.g. super models, Egyptians, a frog or jelly. Then Paul shouted out something like "frog" and all the children who were frogs had to leap around and swap seats with someone else who was a "frog". However, Paul filled in a space, so whoever was still in the middle at the end had to shout out the next name. The person in the middle could also say "walkies" and everyone would have to walk around.

After, we did work on emotions. Paul told us to pretend we were in a supermarket and one person had to always be angry, and the other person had to be really kind, so opposite emotions. We then went down to the hall and acted and got some feedback.

During the week, we wrote our own scripts based on an issue that was unfair. We typed them up and edited them. Then we had the opportunity to perform our scripts once we had completed a final draft.

5ZM Botley School

West Way update for March 2018

The sale of the West Way shopping centre and development site area went through in the last week of January. So Mace (Botley Development Company) now own the centre. The price paid to the Vale for their part was £12.4m, £1.4m less than in the original agreement. In addition some conditions of sale were waived, or treated liberally. We do not know how this price and conditions were arrived at, and there is an argument that the viability assessment for providing affordable housing should be reviewed as a result.

Mace have boarded up the empty shops, and are fighting a battle against graffiti. Notices have been put up saying that they are in consultation with local schools and art groups about putting artwork on the boards, and request that these efforts not be spoiled. The Vale Council (or their previous contractors) removed the litter bins, which has not helped in terms of tidiness, and closed the toilets. We contacted Mace, who were not aware of the problem and are now in touch with the contractors: the bins should be reinstalled and the toilets reopened by the time you read this. Mace's current contact for residents to raise facilities issues is David Macfarlane: david@spbroadway.com.



The planning application P17/V3298/FUL (described in January's article) for the changed plans has not yet gone to the Vale's Planning Committee (as at the end of February). The application now contains information on proposed landscaping, which had not been included in the December plans and has brought to light issues about the main pedestrian street through the centre. The area between the student blocks and residential/retail block E (i.e., what is now the Square) would have a stepped area with ramps, which has implications for deliveries and emergency vehicles needing to access it.

In the meantime Mace have put forward a "Community Employment Plan" which they needed to do to satisfy Planning Conditions (application P18/V0317/DIS). This has an "aspirational target" that "5% of workforce have Oxfordshire postcodes", with a "stretch target" of 10%. One wonders whether 95% could come from outside the County. They also aim for a target that "5% of those working onsite (full time equivalent) are between 18–25 years old" (13% of the whole workforce will be aged 18 to 25). The prospect for local businesses getting work seems low, as only "5% of the build value will be awarded to local companies" with "local to be defined as 30-mile radius of Oxford" – which would include Reading, Swindon, Milton Keynes, Newbury, Aylesbury and High Wycombe.

We expect the next stage to be that Mace will put hoardings around the Grant Thornton corner of the site to start work on converting that area into a temporary Co-op, Tesco, Lloyds Pharmacy, Seacourt Hall and Baptist Church. The Library will remain open throughout this work. This work is anticipated by Mace to take three months, with June the likely date for the move of these shops and facilities to the temporary site, after which demolition and reconstruction can start, if the planning conditions have been fulfilled.

WWCC will continue to monitor and comment on applications for any changes and for discharge of conditions, and to raise any issues with facilities during this ongoing transition period.

To stay informed, please keep an eye on our website **www.westwayconcern.wordpress.com** and you can also find us on social media **[www.twitter.com/westwayconcern](https://twitter.com/westwayconcern)** and **facebook.com/westwayconcern**.

Mary Gill, Co-chair, West Way Community Concern

Ahh – Coffee!

How could such an innocuous looking bean be so human friendly? Or is it the case that we should take a closer look at all plants, and that they may also prove more useful than we may think in our lives today?

Sitting chatting over a cup of black coffee the other day (black, because I was eating a buttered croissant) and talking to a French friend; inevitably the conversation veered towards food and drink.



We agreed on the necessity for our daily intake of caffeine to awaken our senses to the day ahead, the comfort of holding that black liquid in our hand, admiring its thick consistency. Then, having finished the drink, I viewed the grains inside the porcelain mug and had the delight of seeing – ‘murmurations’ of the future – a horse galloping across a moor, its rider clinging to its streaming mane. Our talk focussed on coffee grains. Did they have other uses?

‘Well, yes,’ I said. I had used them most successfully this past summer for protecting my seedlings from the usually unstoppable appetites of snails and slugs. Firstly, I placed all the seedlings in their trays on a large sheet of wood/mdf, then surrounded the entire area with a continuous mound of coffee grains (kindly supplied by a local supermarket). It was the first time ALL my seedlings had ever grown to maturity.

My friend then came back with the following: If you want to grow mushrooms, particularly Oyster Mushrooms, then coffee grains are your best growing medium. They have been pasteurised and are full of nutrients. First order your spawn (say 500g of spawn to 2.5kg spent grounds) plus one filter-patch grow bag, or 2-litre freezer bag with four 5mm holes in the sides. Go to a local friendly café and ask for their fresh spent coffee grounds. Within 24 hours weigh out 2.5kg into a clean mixing bowl. Wash your hands and forearms before mixing in the spawn and filling your cultivation bag 2/3 full. Seal the top.

Piano Tuition



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zenism80@hotmail.com



Place bag in a warm dark place for three weeks. Now bring into a place with low light, but plenty of fresh air. Cut a 5cm x 5cm hole in the bag and spray with water twice a day. Tiny mushrooms should now appear, growing daily. (For further info google 'How to Grow Oyster Mushrooms on Waste Coffee Grounds'.)

I wonder what other uses you may have found for the ingredients or by-products in our meals, the food we eat or the beverages we drink.

Dianne Cockburn

[Here's another coffee use, Dianne: Save your spent coffee grounds in a pot by the sink, and rub them in with a drop of washing up liquid to get grease and dirt off your hands after mending your bike. Editor]

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## LOUIE MEMORIAL PAVILION COMMUNITY ART EXHIBITION

OXFORDSHIRE  
**ART**  
WEEKS

**SATURDAY 19th MAY 11am - 5pm**

**SUNDAY 20th MAY 11am - 5pm**

**Feeling creative? We're having a community art exhibition at the Pavilion. Whatever your style or medium, we hope to have your work on display!**

**Open to all Botley / North Hinksey Parish residents, artwork should be no bigger than 30cm x 30cm**

**For more info, please email [emmettcasley@gmail.com](mailto:emmettcasley@gmail.com) or call 01865**

## **A community vision for Louie Memorial Fields**

This time last year, North Hinksey Parish Council's Recreation & Amenities Committee was analysing the results of a consultation with young people about leisure provision in our community. This is not a new local issue. Around ten years ago NHPC invested in the parish-owned facilities at Louie Memorial Fields off Arnold's Way, securing funding for a new MUGA (multi-use games area) outside the Pavilion and updating the children's play area in the lower field. Following destruction of the Botley Skate Bowl from an arson attack in 2009, the then-Council consulted on plans for a replacement skate park. After the 2011 election the incoming Council did not publish or act on those results. However this period saw the completion of substantial environmental works to the ecologically sensitive Louie Memorial copse and fenland.

In 2012 the Parish Council was presented with a petition of 800+ signatures calling for a new skate park at Louie Memorial Fields. A general parish-wide leisure survey followed, and under the current Parish Council elected in 2015 the improvement of parish-owned facilities has been a key objective. In the meantime a team of dedicated local volunteers who serve as Louie Memorial Pavilion Trustees have done all they can to improve the appearance and functioning of that building – a challenging task, given the relatively poor design and construction that became outdated years ago. Nevertheless, Pavilion and football pitch bookings have steadily increased over the last five years. The 4th Oxford Scout Group, whose neighbouring Hut is similarly in vital need of updating, is growing and meets at Louie Memorial Fields four nights a week. Add in regular usage of the Pavilion by North Hinksey Youth Club, daytime use of the football pitch and MUGA by Matthew Arnold School, and casual use of the open space by walkers and families: it's clear that the facilities at Louie Memorial Fields are a valued hub of community life.

Why go through the recent history? Because it's time to look forward and to secure the value of the fields for the decades ahead. Building on the consultations of recent years and with support from our District Councillors Debby Hallett and Emily Smith, this year Vale of White Horse District Council is funding professional work to develop a master plan for improvements to Louie Memorial Fields. The key focus is on a new building to replace the Pavilion and Scout Hut (both long past their intended shelf life), but plans for future work need to consider the context of the surrounding outdoor space. Eco-friendly design, parking,

accessibility, football pitch condition, additional outdoor fitness or play equipment – before we can invest in any of these, we need a cohesive vision of how the total space can work well for the benefit of the whole community.

In December NHPC appointed Nortoft planning consultants ([www.nortoft.co.uk](http://www.nortoft.co.uk)) to carry out the first phase of master planning work. The team is led by Nortoft managing director David O'Neil and works in partnership with SWA Architects ([www.swa-architects.co.uk](http://www.swa-architects.co.uk)), whose many projects include the design of West Oxford Community Centre. Nortoft have been doing feasibility studies since January, drawing on past NHPC consultations and other research to generate ideas for improved facilities at Louie Memorial Fields. In the coming months they will put forward a preferred option for longer-term development of a new Pavilion building and the surrounding space.

This is where you come in! At the **Annual Parish Meeting on Thursday, 22nd March (7.30pm at Seacourt Hall)**, Nortoft will present its work to date and will launch its public consultation. Please come along and let us know what you would like to see for the future of Louie Memorial Fields. It has taken years of work to get to this point, and for the first time all of the key stakeholders (Pavilion Trustees, Scouts, NHPC and Vale District Council) are aligned in our shared commitment to make substantial improvements to our parish-owned facilities. Everyone is warmly invited to be a part of this process, so that we can all enjoy our valued community spaces for many more years. Help us to develop a vision that the whole community can be proud of!

**Cllr Caroline Potter**, Chair of NHPC Recreation & Amenities Committee

**North Hinksey Parish Council**

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**Thursday 22nd March**

**Seacourt Hall, Botley**

**7pm for 7.30 pm start**

**#botleyfirst #botleyfirst #botleyfirst #botleyfirst**

*Your raving reporter has been forensically scouring the news media, filtering out the fake from the truth. I can now reveal a number of scoops that may have otherwise gone unreported. Eat your heart out Oxford Times / Mail / Washington Post!*

**#botleybayeuxbid**

Still at forefront of cultural events, Botley bid submitted to display Bayeux Tapestry when arrives in UK. Plan is to wrap it around Elms Parade, capitalising on success of human protest chain. Should ensure no 'accidental' demolition during building work. Crowd funding set up to raise cash for Blu Tak and bulldog clips.

**#megameghan**

Yippee! Meghan Markle agrees to open new Botley Centre. Diary pretty full, would not be free until 2025, but BDC has said will make special effort to get Phase 1 finished by then.

**#toptap**

More Yippee! In keeping with new informal royals, Harry will be holding stag night at Tap Social. Plans for pop-up palace outside, dispensing royal 'street food'. Some disquiet from equerry, viz. "I say, what exactly is a 'street'?"

**#bonzabanksy**

Breaking news! Banksy rumoured to have been spotted sizing up boarding on ex-Tattoo parlour. Watch this space (free quotes).

**#splishsplash**

Seacourt Park & Ride renamed Moor & Sail

News in the wind, yet to be substantiated, investigations ongoing

**#Botley Bridge #Botley Wall**

*OK nurse, I'm coming!*

**Mike Bartlam**

## North Hinksey Art Group – come to our exhibition

As you may have seen in February's edition of *The Sprout*, North Hinksey Art Group are currently holding an exhibition of their work in SS Peter & Paul Church. This is one of the ongoing exhibitions organized and hung by Botley Arts, and our local group's pictures are on display until mid-April.

Included in the exhibition are flower and animal studies, architecture pictures, interiors, landscapes, and seascapes. Many



feature local scenes – a study of the bridge at Blenheim Park, the Bridge of Sighs in Oxford plus a couple of pictures of Turl Street, the Oxford skyline, Peachcroft Farm, a landscape of the Ridgeway, Charlton-on-Otmoor, and Binsey in the snow have been much admired already. The artworks use a number of different media including examples of pen and wash, pastel, wax resist, mono printing and, of course, watercolour.

Pictures by twelve different artists are on display. This is also an opportunity to compare different interpretations of the same subject, for instance there are two pictures each of tigers, washing on a line, plus a couple of the same Oxford street scene. These particular paintings illustrate the results of some of our weekly art lessons.

Attending the class helps feed our desire to be creative by giving us the impetus to paint and draw. Our teacher, Christina Wartke-Dunbar, frequently pushes us out of our comfort zones but provides us with plenty of encouragement while we enjoy the camaraderie of fellow artists. Without the classes some of us feel we would not flourish and would be disinclined to experiment with different styles and techniques. I always come away from the class wanting to do more.

We held a Private View of the current exhibition on Friday 9 February which was attended by around 40 family and friends. I'm sure the wine



and nibbles helped but it was a joyous occasion and we received many complimentary and appreciative comments. Here is a photo of the event.

We very much hope that you can drop into the church on West Way (open daily 9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.) to look at our artwork and perhaps leave some comments in the visitor's book. You will find there is a list of exhibitors which also gives our telephone numbers if you are interested in purchasing a picture. Prices can be found in a list on the wall.

**Viv Smith**

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LOCAL PLANNING APPLICATIONS

P18/V0005/LDP	27 Laburnum Rd. One storey extension - previously permitted LDC – to be extended from 3m to 4m.	4 January <i>Target Dec Date: 1 March</i>
P18/V0090/LDP	86 Turner Drive. Certificate of Lawfulness for proposed loft conversion	12 January <i>TDD:9 March</i>
P18/V0091/FUL and P18/V0092/A	The Oxford Sofa Studio, 51 West Way. Change of use from Sofa Studio to vehicle hire branch (Sui Generis).	22 January <i>TDD:19 March</i>
P18/V0046/LB	Old Manor Stables, Nth Hinksey Lane. Add single roof light to match existing. Enlarge external door opening and replace with glazed French doors.	24 January <i>TDD:21 March</i>
P18/V0221/HH	22 Sweetmans Rd. Single storey rear extension.	26 January <i>TDD:23 March</i>
P18/V0242/HH	15 Finmore Rd. Two storey side extension.	2 February <i>TDD:30 March</i>
P18/V0239/FUL	Sweetmans Cottage Yarnells Hill. Variation of condition 2 P16/V0651/FUL Demolish existing dwelling, erect 5-bed eco house plus separate garage.	5 February <i>TDD: 2 April</i>
P18/V0317/DIS	Botley Centre West Way. Discharge of condition 38 – Community Employment Plan on application ref. P16/V0246/FUL	7 February <i>TDD:21 March</i>
P18/V0328/DIS	27 North Hinksey Village. Discharge of condition 3 (windows/doors/materials) in P16/V3033/LB & P16/V3032/HH.	9 February

Botley Sobell Shop, closed 16.12.17. R.I.P.

Lines on the closing of the Sobell Charity Shop, Botley

So, Farewell
Then
Judi and Tracy.
You ran the
Sobell Shop
In Botley,
Until it closed down.
It was always
So friendly,
Like someone's front room.
Where else
Could you buy a novel,
A tent, and an
Engagement ring?
And where
Do we all go now –
JR outpatients?
Some may go to
Bicester.
Others may go
Bonkers.
Yes. Bonkers.
That is what
It was.
The most bonkers
Charity shop in Oxford.
And the
Best.
So, thank you,
Sweet ladies,
Time please.
Cheers.
Three cheers
For you
All.

Oh how we miss you, our beloved local Chazzer! And we are not the only ones. The poem on the previous page is from Professor Bookworm (Stephen), one of their many fans. Sobell Shops had this to say:

It was with great sadness that we had to close our Botley shop on Saturday 16th December, due to the redevelopment of the site. For the last 18 years the shop had been at the heart of the Botley community and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all you local residents for your support and loyalty during this time.


Under the expert management of Judi and Tracy and their loyal team of volunteers, the shop was always fully stocked and offering great-value donated items to local residents and workplaces. The fantastic team of volunteers worked so hard and gave so generously of their time, that Sobell House were able to maximise the funds they generated and provide invaluable support to the Hospice.

Both Judi and Tracy have moved across to our flagship store, So Bicester Superstore, where they can continue to put their retail skills to good use. They would love to receive a visit from Botley customers.

We will be setting up a **one-off donation collection point in St Peter and Paul's Church Hall on Monday 12th March from 12–3pm**. If you have donations for Sobell House please do bring them along during this time and Tracy will be there to accept them. But PLEASE do not leave them at the church at any other time as they cannot store them.

We hope that the community will continue to support us in this new venture.

Debbie Askew, Sobell Shops Marketing and Communications Manager.

 The logo features the word "SALES" in large, bold, white capital letters, followed by a large, stylized white ampersand "&", and then the word "LETTINGS" in large, bold, white capital letters. The entire logo is set against a solid black background.	<p>Oxford 01865 511444 oxford@ carterjonas.co.uk</p> <p>Carter Jonas</p>
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Food Relief Channel – what’s it really for?

Perhaps forty or fifty people came to the W.I. Hall at the end of January to hear what the Oxford Preservation Trust had to say about the Flood Relief Channel and how it would affect Hinksey Meadow. Debbie Dance, the president, was the main speaker, and the general sense of her talk was that OPT was feeling its way. Of course they don't want to stand in the way of the prosperity of the city, but at the same time their job is to protect our ancient buildings and green spaces.

OPT had not been invited to the original discussion about the scheme, but now they are part of it, they are making a visible contribution. Thanks to them, the very rare grassland affected is being shown on all the maps used in the consultation. Thanks to them, all the trees doomed for the chop have now been marked with yellow paint. Thanks to them, yellow posts now mark the rim of the new channel, and they are talking of getting the actual height of the bridge across the middle of Willow Walk demonstrated in scaffolding, so we can get a sense of what's intended. And make no mistake – it's big! The bridge will not be a friendly stone one like the one by the school. It will be more like a motorway span, 4 metres above ground level, with a long, wide arch of 19 metres, cutting out a swathe of trees. There will be a second bridge over Monk's Causeway, and hardstanding between the two on the city side of the stream for works vehicles. The scrape itself, of which the 27% belonging to OPT is all in our parish, will be 60 metres wide, and the ground will be 60 cm lower than now. And what is it all for?

To “reduce” flood risk to 1200 homes, according to the main Government website. How? “By lowering parts of the floodplain and working on some of the existing rivers and streams that run through it, to make more space for water”. 400,000 tons of earth will be shifted, to be reshaped in banks near Hinksey Heights Golf Course. It's hard to see why dredging the silt from the rivers, untouched for forty years, wouldn't have the same effect, much more cheaply.

The agencies involved hope that the final effect will be unobtrusive and enhance the potential for wildlife in the area, but they don't seem to have thought it through. The landowners are up in arms because no fences will be allowed. But of course without fences you can't have grazing (from which they get their income). And without grazing, the land reverts to scrub unless it's regularly mown. There is a maintenance budget, but only for the first ten years, after which it will be left to fend for itself.

There are thorny questions for the Preservation Trust. Blue pipes around the field are metering the hydrology. If it turns out that by lowering the ground level you change the underlying water table, then that will be the end of the famous MG4 grassland that has taken 1000 years to develop. And, in the absence of a maintenance budget, will the Trust become liable for keeping the channel clear? What might that mean?

The trouble is, the scheme has momentum. Perhaps it has already become unstoppable. The Government is investing £65 million in it, and the latest £4 million has recently been contributed by the City Council from the Housing Infrastructure Fund. The Government elsewhere says that the scheme “is required to help unlock the land and capacity for hundreds of new homes”. Where? In the flood plain? Apparently so. It seems we are talking about the University’s plans to redevelop Osney Mead as a new housing estate. So that’s what it’s all about! Did the Oxford Flood Alliance realize that when they persuaded the agencies to stay with the scheme when they were thinking of dropping it, I wonder.

My own feeling – and I speak as someone who has been flooded three times – is that the relief works already in place, thanks largely to OFA, are effective, and should be given more time to prove themselves. In conjunction with dredging the water courses, they may well be all that is needed to control the floods.

History shows that the rivers around this part of the city have been realigned more than once for the sake of the humans who live there. The main channel itself, flowing under Osney Bridge, is man-made. If the so-called Flood Relief Scheme is actually about building over the flood plain on the west of Oxford, then that is not unheard of in itself. But that is what we should be talking about and voting on, not flood relief.

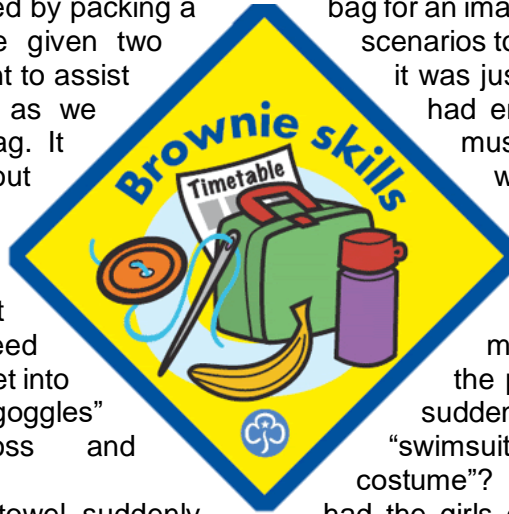
You *could* call it win–win: we get flood relief *and* more housing, but the price we pay will be Oxford’s green setting and the irreplaceable ancient meadow. Is that price too high?

The Planning Application will be submitted in the middle of March. That will be the time to look carefully at what’s involved. If the Trust does decide to oppose the scheme, it will be David taking on Goliath – their staff of six individuals, versus the five mighty agencies who champion it. They will need all the help they can get.

Ag MacKeith

Brownies pack their bags

This term we welcomed Olivia, Arianna, Faith and Pauline to 2nd Botley Brownies. Our programme this term is to do the Brownie Skills badge as a Unit. We started by packing a bag for an imaginary weekend away. We were given two scenarios to pack for and in the Six that I went to assist it was just as well it was a made-up trip, as we had entirely forgotten to pack a wash bag. It must have been the long debate about what we should pack for our imagined trip to the swimming pool that distracted us. They couldn't see that we really would need more than a pair of goggles to be let into the public pool! My mime of "goggles" suddenly got the message across and "swimsuit" or is it costume"? (another debate) plus a towel suddenly had the girls demanding that we add those items to our list as quickly as possible before time was up.



Another session, and we considered what we might need to have with us when we went for a hike and/or walk. What kind of clothing was required to cover all kinds of weather, what kind of footwear would be suitable, etc. It used to be money and suitable small coins to make a phone call, but is now all about having a fully-charged mobile phone, an energy-providing snack, a drink, etc. We also considered what was not needed... Shiny party dresses and an electronic game was the suggestion – not needed unless, of course, you happen to be hiking to a fancy dress party that you think will be so tedious that you need to bring your own entertainment! (Why are you going in the first place if it's going to be terrible, though?)

In the middle of term, the anniversary of the first Votes for Women fell on a Tuesday. Brown Owl was not going to let that go without a demonstration (pun intended) of what that actually meant. The Sixers and Seconders were asked to go off and choose a game they wanted the whole Unit to play. We then told the rest of the Unit that we were going to pretend to be men and the Sixers and Seconders were, unbeknown to them, women with NO votes. The Sixers and Seconders duly chose a

game but the remainder of the Unit were then asked what they wanted to play. They came up with a different game, and that game was then played. At first the Sixers and Seconders accepted this but after the third time it happened they said, "Hold on, this isn't fair. You're not listening to us! It was then explained to them that that was what happened to Women 100 years ago. A long discussion then followed on what it must have been like to live in a society where you have no voice. The girls were unimpressed with previous centuries.

Lucy Howes

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## **Holy Week and Easter in the Parish of North Hinksey with Botley**

### **29th March – Maundy Thursday**

9.00am Morning Prayer at St. Lawrence

7.00pm The Eucharist, foot washing and watching in the garden  
at St. Peter & St Paul

### **30<sup>th</sup> March – Good Friday**

9.00am Morning Prayer at St. Peter & St. Paul

1.00pm Short devotional service followed by the Walk of Witness  
leaving St. Peter & St. Paul for St. Lawrence

2.00pm Devotional service at St. Lawrence

### **Holy Saturday**

9.30-12.00 Free coffee and hot cross buns served in the church of  
St. Peter & St. Paul.

Making the Easter Garden

Cake and produce stall with Easter goodies on sale

### **Easter Day Services – 1<sup>st</sup> April**

9.30am Holy Communion at St. Peter & Paul, Botley

11.30am Holy Communion at St. Lawrence



## Doing a Favour to Bridges and Branches

Now that was an evening to remember! Dean Court Community Centre, 23rd February 2018. The Bridges and Branches Fantastic Favours Auction, which raised a stonking £4000 plus for our two local charities, still doing their very best for the youngsters of Botley in the absence of state funding.

The hall was buzzing, tables packed with lively locals looking forward to the fun. Our bearded auctioneer was well up to the task, and the haul of favours called in was wildly diverse. They ranged from a Caribbean holiday apartment on St Vincent to a ride on the back of a classic Suzuki GS 1000S (or alternatively, a weekend in Weymouth and a ride in an E-type), from a guided tour of the Mini plant to a guided tour of the Ridgeway Hillforts, from a course of bass guitar lessons to a chocolate cake covered in Smarties, from an MOT at Botley Motors to a bike service at Warlands. The surprise top bid was £820 for a stay at a luxurious holiday cottage in Swanage. It fetched nearly three times the bid for the stay on St Vincent, but of course it was much cheaper to get to.



Here's a photo to give you a flavour. Were you there? Fun, wasn't it!



# Randoms

## Botley W.I.

Mystery speaker on Tuesday 6 March, 7:30 pm. Bring a magnifying glass if you have one. Craft group 20 March, WI Hall. Walking group Thursday, 22nd March, Farmoor, meet 10.00 at hall. Book group 21 March, 7:30 pm. *Come and join us!*

## Mystery object

What can this be? It was found in the earth under an ancient stable. Made of machined brass, hollow, as if to sheathe some kind of wooden shaft, perhaps. About 10cm long and 5cm high. The hole you can see is just on one side. Marks suggest something may have lain across the top. Any ideas to the Editor, please.



## Dean Court Community Breakfast

We are looking for friendly volunteers to come and help out at our Community Breakfast which takes place on the last Sunday of the month. We serve bacon and eggs, waffles and toasties, have activities for children and newspapers for adults. It's a great community event that anyone is welcome to attend. We need people to help with setting-up, cooking and serving between 8.30 and 10.30 am and then people to help with cooking, serving and clearing away between 10.30 am and 12.30 pm. Just a couple of hours, once a month. If this sounds like you, email Sarah at [deancourtcc@gmail.com](mailto:deancourtcc@gmail.com)

## 2018 Spring Clean

We've yet to hear of any local initiatives, despite the parlous state of our shopping centre and most of the gutters, banks and hedges around the parish. If you do decide to get out and make a difference on the weekend of 3rd and 4th March, send us a photo, and we'll be happy to publish it.

**Organizations: If your organization is not listed here, please send details to [editor@thesprout.org.uk](mailto:editor@thesprout.org.uk) or telephone 724452 for inclusion.**

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1st Botley Brownies</b><br>Girls aged 7–10                        | Dean Court Community Centre Thur 6–7.30 Fiona Wheeler, <a href="mailto:firstbotleybrownies@gmail.com">firstbotleybrownies@gmail.com</a>                                                         |
| <b>2nd Botley Brownies</b><br>Girls aged 7–10                        | Rosary Room, Yarnells Hill. Tues 6 -7.30 : Alison Griffin 01865 379247                                                                                                                          |
| <b>4th Oxford Scout Group</b><br>Beavers, Cub Scouts, Scouts         | Scout Hall, Arnolds Way; <a href="mailto:mail@thefourth.org.uk">mail@thefourth.org.uk</a><br>Website: <a href="http://www.thefourth.org.uk/">http://www.thefourth.org.uk/</a>                   |
| <b>15th Oxford Scout Group</b><br>Boys and girls welcome             | Meet Fridays, Botley Baptist Hall Contact: Julie Tatham 01865 863074 or Amy Cusden 07887 654386                                                                                                 |
| <b>Baby &amp; Toddler Group</b>                                      | Tues/Thurs 9.15–11, SS Peter & Paul Church Hall                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Badminton Club</b>                                                | Thurs 7-8pm at Matthew Arnold Sports Hall. Garry Clark 0777 3559 314 <a href="mailto:garryclark13@gmail.com">garryclark13@gmail.com</a>                                                         |
| <b>Books on Wheels</b> R.V.S.                                        | Free Library Service for housebound Ox. 248142                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Botley Boys &amp; Girls F.C.</b><br>Football teams from ages 8-16 | Jason Barley Ox. 242926 <a href="mailto:jbarley1@sky.com">jbarley1@sky.com</a> or Brendan Byrne Ox.792531 <a href="mailto:brendan.byrne999@gmail.com">brendan.byrne999@gmail.com</a>            |
| <b>Botley Health Walks</b>                                           | Wednesday 9.30 a.m Contact: Briony 246497                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Botley Library</b>                                                | 01865 248142. Open till 7 on Friday and 1pm on Sat, otherwise 9.30 to 5.30 (closed Wednesdays).                                                                                                 |
| <b>Botley Singers</b>                                                | Thur 7.30, St Andrew's Church, Dean Court. Angela Astley-Penny Ox.242189 <a href="mailto:angastpen@aol.com">angastpen@aol.com</a>                                                               |
| <b>Chair-based Exercise Class</b>                                    | Tuesdays 10.30 – 11.30 a.m. Seacourt Hall Contact Lizzie, Oxon Age UK, 07785 425601                                                                                                             |
| <b>Community Fridge</b>                                              | For all. Put food in, take food out. Ss P&P church, Mon–Sat 9–5, Sun 11–5. Riki Therivel 07759 135811                                                                                           |
| <b>Cumnor Choral Society</b>                                         | Friday 7.30 to 9.30 pm Contact: 01235 533726 or 07552 786127 or <a href="http://www.cumnorchoral.co.uk">www.cumnorchoral.co.uk</a>                                                              |
| <b>Cumnor Chess Club</b>                                             | Thurs 7–9pm Cumnor Old School. Steven Bennett 862788 <a href="http://www.cumnorchessclub.co.uk">www.cumnorchessclub.co.uk</a>                                                                   |
| <b>Cumnor &amp; District Historical Society</b>                      | Last Monday of the month 7.30-9.00 Cumnor Old School. 01865 724808                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Cumnor Gardening Club</b>                                         | Details on website at <a href="http://cumnorgardens.org.uk/">http://cumnorgardens.org.uk/</a> or phone Chris Impey, 01865 721026                                                                |
| <b>Fit Steps – exercise based on dance</b>                           | Friday 6–7pm, Seacourt Hall. Email Rosalie on <a href="mailto:rosalie.crane@btinternet.com">rosalie.crane@btinternet.com</a>                                                                    |
| <b>Harmony InSpires, Ladies' Acappella Singing Group</b>             | Wed 7.30 at Appleton village hall. C. Casson 01235 831352 or <a href="mailto:harmonyinspires@hotmail.co.uk">harmonyinspires@hotmail.co.uk</a>                                                   |
| <b>Hill End Volunteer Team</b>                                       | Contact: David Millin on <a href="mailto:david.millin@hill-end.org">david.millin@hill-end.org</a> , call 01865-863510 or visit <a href="http://www.hillend-oec.co.uk">www.hillend-oec.co.uk</a> |
| <b>Let's Sing! – singing group</b>                                   | Weds 2pm, WOCC, details Emily 07969 522368 or email <a href="mailto:emformusic@outlook.com">emformusic@outlook.com</a>                                                                          |
| <b>Morris Dancing – Cry Havoc</b>                                    | Barbara Brett 249599 or <a href="mailto:bag@cryhavoc.org.uk">bag@cryhavoc.org.uk</a>                                                                                                            |
| <b>Mum and Baby Yoga for babies from 6 wks to crawling</b>           | Mondays 10.30 at Dean Court CC, contact Jacqueline Rice via <a href="https://yogawithjacqueline.co.uk">https://yogawithjacqueline.co.uk</a>                                                     |

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|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>North Hinksey Preschool and Childcare Clubs</b>   | Mon–Fri 7.45am –6.00 pm. 01865 794287 or email <a href="mailto:nhps.manager1@gmail.com">nhps.manager1@gmail.com</a>                                                                                |
| <b>N Hinksey Art Group</b>                           | Weds 10 – 12.00 W.I. Hall Tel: Christina 07931 707997                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>N Hinksey Bellringers</b>                         | Contact: Ray Rook 01865 241451                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>N Hinksey Conservation Volunteers</b>             | Meets at weekends. Contact Voirrey Carr 07798743121 <a href="mailto:voirreyc@aol.com">voirreyc@aol.com</a>                                                                                         |
| <b>N Hinksey, Friends of</b>                         | Annual Cricket Match & Walk. Douglas Bond 791213.                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>N Hinksey Horticultural Soc</b>                   | Contact: Ann Dykes Ox 251821 <a href="mailto:anndykes@hotmail.com">anndykes@hotmail.com</a>                                                                                                        |
| <b>N Hinksey Parish Council</b>                      | Alan Stone 01865 861992 <a href="mailto:nhpcclerk@msn.com">nhpcclerk@msn.com</a>                                                                                                                   |
| <b>N Hinksey Youth Club</b>                          | Wednesdays at Arnold's Way pavilion, call Daz on 07791 212866 or see Facebook                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Over Sixties Lunch Club</b>                       | Every other Thursday. Seacourt Hall. Viv Smith 01865 241539 or Jackie Warner 01865 721386                                                                                                          |
| <b>Oxford Flood Alliance</b>                         | R Thurston 01865 723663 or 07973 292035                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Oxford Flower Arranging Club</b>                  | 4th Thursday Cumnor. Dymna Walker: 01865 865259                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Oxford Otters</b>                                 | Swimming for people with disabilities. Sundays, twice monthly. Contact: Alan Cusden 723420                                                                                                         |
| <b>Oxford Rugby Club</b>                             | Boys and girls from 5, <a href="mailto:kevin.honner@ntlworld.com">kevin.honner@ntlworld.com</a> Seniors, training etc <a href="mailto:jbrodley@chandlings.org.uk">jbrodley@chandlings.org.uk</a> . |
| <b>Oxford Sports Lawn Tennis Club, N Hinksey</b>     | Family club: Melanie Riste 848658 or <a href="mailto:melanie_riste@hotmail.com">melanie_riste@hotmail.com</a>                                                                                      |
| <b>Parkinson's Disease Soc</b>                       | Contact: Pen Keyte, Branch Secretary 01865 556032.                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Raleigh Park, Friends of</b>                      | David Brown <a href="mailto:raleighpark@raleighpark.org.uk">raleighpark@raleighpark.org.uk</a>                                                                                                     |
| <b>Royal Voluntary Service (West Way Day Centre)</b> | Mon & Fri 10–3pm, Field House, 07740 611971. <a href="mailto:oxfordshirehub@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk">oxfordshirehub@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk</a>                                          |
| <b>Saturdads Botley Bridges</b>                      | Fun activities and trips for Dads and under 5's 10 am–noon 1st Sat of month. Tel: 243955                                                                                                           |
| <b>Seacourt Hall management committee</b>            | Contact: Michael Cockman 07766 317691 <a href="mailto:michael.cockman@gmail.com">michael.cockman@gmail.com</a> .                                                                                   |
| <b>Shotokan Karate club</b>                          | 6+ WOCC twice weekly Martyn King 07836 646450                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Weight Watchers</b>                               | Thursdays 6pm at SS Peter & Paul Church Hall Banso tel: 07779 253899 <a href="mailto:bansob@aol.com">bansob@aol.com</a>                                                                            |
| <b>West Oxford Bowls Club</b>                        | Contact: Marion Bostock 436277                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>West Oxford Taekwon Do Club</b>                   | Mon, Thurs 6.30-8pm, MA gym, contact Chris Hall 07815 899698 <a href="http://www.wotkd.co.uk">www.wotkd.co.uk</a>                                                                                  |
| <b>West Oxford U3A</b>                               | (Uni of the 3rd Age) <a href="http://westoxfordu3a.org.uk/">http://westoxfordu3a.org.uk/</a>                                                                                                       |
| <b>Which Craft?</b>                                  | Pavilion, Arnold's way, fourth Monday, contact <a href="mailto:whichcraft.botley@yahoo.co.uk">whichcraft.botley@yahoo.co.uk</a>                                                                    |
| <b>Women's Institute (Botley)</b>                    | Liz Manson, 244175 email <a href="mailto:liz.manson@virginmedia.com">liz.manson@virginmedia.com</a>                                                                                                |

