SUTTON COURTENAY NEWS

VOLUME 54 NO. 6

JULY/AUGUST 2025



Three exhibits from the Flower Festival 21 & 22 June. From the left: the winning display, a beautiful arrangement and a thought-provoking entry.

VILLAGE DIARY FOR JULY				
Tue 1	Parish Council Meeting (p. 3)	Village Hall	19:15	
Every Wed	DAMASCUS Youth Project (ADYP) (p. 4)	Rec Ground/VH	18:30-19:45	
Thurs 3 & 17	WeCare2 (p. 11)	River Room	11:15-12:30	
Sat 5	Community Brunch (p. 10)	River Room	9:30-11:30	
Every Sat	The Abbey Café (p. 7)	The Abbey	10:00-14:00	
Thurs 10	Together in Stitches (p. 11)	River Room	19:30-21:00	
Thurs 10 & 24	Community Café (p. 9)	River Room	10:30-12:00	
Mon 21	Knit & Natter (p. 11)	River Room	14:00-16:00	
Sat 26	Movie Matinée (p. 10)	River Room	16:00	

VILLAGE DIARY FOR AUGUST

Sat 2	Community Brunch (p. 10)	River Room	9:30-11:30
Every Sat	The Abbey Café (p. 7)	The Abbey	10:00-14:00
Tues 5 & Fri 15	Stay & Play (p. 12)	River Room	11:00
Every Wed	DAMASCUS Youth Project (ADYP) (p. 4)	Rec Ground/VH	18:30-19:45
Thurs 7 & 21	WeCare2 (p. 11)	River Room	11:15-12:30
Thurs 14	Together in Stitches (p. 11)	River Room	19:30-21:00
Thurs 14 & 28	Community Café (p. 9)	River Room	10:30-12:00
Mon 18	Knit & Natter (p. 11)	River Room	14:00-16:00
Sat 23	Movie Matinée (p. 10)	River Room	16:00
Sat 30	The Mikado – Opera Anywhere (p. 10)	All Saints' Church	18:00

Previous copies of SCN are available on the website under Archives at suttoncourtenaynews.co.uk

SEPTEMBER 2025 SCN DEADLINE – WEDNESDAY 20TH AUGUST 2025

Unless otherwise stated the Sutton Courtenay News copy deadline is the 3rd Wednesday of the month.

VILLAGE CONTACTS

Parish (Council	Chair:
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Rita Atkinson, 848694

ritaatkinson@suttoncourtenay-pc.gov.uk Stay & Play Toddler Group: Facebook page: @SCstayandplay Friends of All Saints'-Chair: Sue Jenkins 07885 437454 Matrix Music School: 847264 847401 The Abbey: Village Hall – SC: scvillagehallbookings@googlemail.com Cricket Club: drb71@hotmail.co.uk Nordic Walking Group: Graham Wells 847322 Churchmere Carp Synd.: Andy Barrett 07717 662039 DAMASCUS Youth Project: 07956 038022 SC Local History Society: John Talbot schs.org.uk enquiries@sclhs.org.uk SCIDS (Drama Society): Morna Whitlock, 848335 morna28whitlock@gmail.com All Saints Singers: Kathy Harrop-Griffiths, 848230 secretary@allsaintssingers.org www.allsaintssingers.org Sutton Courtenay Action: suttoncourtenayaction@gmail.com Non-urgent Police, 101 or policing team email: AbingdonOuterNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk **Environment Agency:** Landfill Odours 0800 80 70 60 0800 71 46 14 Thames Water (leaks): Thames Water Customer Service: 0800 316 9800 Police Anonymous Hotline: 0800 555 111 105 Power Cuts: Websites: ık

Sutton Courtenay News:	www.suttoncourtenaynews.co.u
Parish Council:	www.suttoncourtenay-pc.gov.uk
Vale of White Horse DC:	www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk
Oxfordshire CC:	www.oxfordshire.gov.uk
Village Hall:	suttoncourtenayvillagehall.co.uk
Action Fraud:	www.actionfraud.police.uk
Citizens Advice:	www.citizensadvice.org.uk

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

The Ministry Team

Rector: The Reverend Canon Helen Kendrick The Rectory, 3, Tullis Close, Sutton Courtenay, OX14 4BD Office: 01235 847179 Home: 01235 848297 Mobile:07443 524216 rector@damascusparish.org.uk Assistant Curate: The Reverend Dov Whittle 07586 969985.curate@damascusparish.org.uk Associate Priest: The Reverend Phil Sutton 07507 378737 revphil@damascusparish.org.uk Associate Priest: The Reverend Rosie Bruce 07707 087131 rosie-bruce@hotmail.co.uk

Churchwarden & Pro-Warden: Alison Budd alison@pbudd.me Pro-Warden: Mary Warrington contrary63@gmail.com Parish Administrator: Alison Bampton 01235 847179 <u>admin@damascusparish.org.uk</u> The DAMASCUS Parish Office All Saints' Church The Green

The DAMASCUS Parish Office, All Saints' Church, The Green, Sutton Courtenay, Abingdon, OX14 4AE For Services of Worship - Please see Page 9

VILLAGE HALL

Sutton Courtenay Village Hall is available to individuals and Commercial users to hire for adult or children's parties as well as other social/regular events. The hall has a bar/ kitchen area with fridge and hot water urn. A smaller Committee room for meetings/gatherings and a fully equipped Kitchen. Facilities include WIFI, Projector screen, microphones and a music centre. A Registered Charity, we are funded by the revenue from this hire which is used to cover the cost of insurance, repairs and utilities. To book the hall go to: suttoncourtenayvillagehall.co.uk and follow the on-screen prompts. If you need to contact the booking clerk, please email: scvillagehallbookings@googlemail.com

SUTTON COURTENAY NEWS CONTACTS

Sutton Courtenay News is published by the editorial team, the members of which are: Katherine Harrop-Griffiths (07946 474238), Kathy Whittaker (07966 512062) and Bernie Jones (07761 375991). Bernie deals with all the advertising.

Sutton Courtenay News is printed with support from the Sutton Courtenay Parish Council.

All contributions for the next edition should be emailed to editor@suttoncourtenaynews.co.uk or scmail07@gmail.com Copy can also be posted in the mailbox on the outside the garden door of Cross Trees, 1 Church Street before the copy deadline. Otherwise, telephone us and we can arrange for collection of your letter. To have any contribution published you must provide your name & contact details to the editors. To advertise, telephone 07761 375991 or email advertising@suttoncourtenaynews.co.uk

For distribution enquiries please contact Sue on 847158 or any of the editors.

The Editors have been contacted by people outside the village who would like to continue receiving a copy of Sutton Courtenay News. It can be viewed on-line at suttoncourtenaynews.co.uk but please contact the editors to discuss what other arrangements can be made for those unable to access the website.

POST OFFICE SERVICES

The nearest Post Office is at Milton, 11H Park Drive OX14 4RS and is open Monday to Friday from 8.00 to 17.15 with a final collection time of 16:45. It is closed on Saturday & Sunday. Further afield there are Post Offices in Didcot (in WHSmith, 188 The Broadway OX11 8RN) & in Abingdon (5-13 West St. Helen Street OX14 5BL) both of which are reasonably accessible by public transport.

SUTTON COURTENAY DEFIBRILLATORS

The village has three defibrillators. One is located outside the front roller doors of Sutton Courtenay Tyres on the High Street. The second is outside the Football Clubhouse in the Recreation Ground. The third is outside the Fish on Appleford Road.







Dirt bikes on Kelaart's Field

Parish Councillors are aware that dirt bikers are frequently using Kelaart's Field,

the recreation ground and some footpaths and causing a disturbance to residents. If you notice dirt motorbikes in these areas please report the issue at the time to Thames Valley Police via their website: www.thamesvalley.police.uk. Reporting helps the police build up a pattern so that they can target resources to when there is a high possibility of encountering the dirt bikes to stop them.

Sutton Courtenay Recreation Ground

Did you know there is a training pitch at the Recreation Ground for people to use. Throughout June, July and August it is available during daylight hours and there are football nets permanently installed. During the football season the pitches are under licence to Sutton Courtenay Football Club, and the Football Club has priority access on its training nights.

Councillor Vacancy

Sutton Courtenay Parish Council can have a maximum of 11 Councillors. At present there are two vacancies and the Council is looking to fill the positions by co-option. Individuals who are on the electoral register and who live or work in the parish or within 3 miles of the parish can be considered for co-option. If you are interested in working in a small team to contribute to local life, taking forward projects which benefit people across the parish, then please contact the Clerk.

PLEASE HELP - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Sutton Courtenay News needs two new volunteer distributors. One for Heritage Park Area and one for Chapel Lane. If you are interested and want to know more, please contact Lynnette by text to 07966 490233 or email editor@suttoncourtenaynews.co.uk Please note the role is unpaid, as a minimum you would be expected to attend monthly meetings and check your Council email account at least once a week. You would be asked to take an active role in a couple of areas of the Council's work across recreational amenities, the cemetery, planning policy, community infrastructure (defibrillators, benches, bins), community events and representing the Parish Council at meetings with local charitable and commercial organisations.

Council meetings and contact details

Members of the public are welcome to attend Council meetings. The dates of the next meetings are Tuesday 1st July, (no August meeting) and Tuesday 2nd September at 7.15pm. Meetings are normally held in the Committee Room at Sutton Courtenay Village Hall.

The agenda for the meeting will be published on the Council's website www.suttoncourtenay-pc.gov.uk and on the noticeboards located outside Hari & Esha News, High Street; near Costcutter, Bradstocks Way; and on the open space at Skylark Fields.

Councillors: Rita Atkinson (chairman), Robert Dalby (vice chairman), Paul Galliver, Cathy King, Joanna O'Callaghan, Lia Plowman, Ian Pratley, Hugo Raworth and Jason Warwick.

to access the Sutton Courtenay Parish Council website:



NORDIC WALKING

With a qualified instructor Wednesdays & Fridays from 09:30 at the Sutton Courtenay Recreation Ground (OX14 4AR) For more information contact Graham Wells at graymar.wells@btopenworld.com

SUTTON COURTENAY (NATIONAL POWER) TRUST

Do you need help? Are you struggling financially?

Sutton Courtenay (National Power) Trust may be able to give some help.

The Trust is a charity local to Sutton Courtenay. It has the ability to make grants to individuals living in Sutton Courtenay and organisations based in Sutton Courtenay which operate for the benefit of the civil parish of Sutton Courtenay.

The Trustees can consider applications for grants to assist with many charitable purposes including personal financial hardship, education, religion, illness, other charitable activities that would benefit Sutton Courtenay and the people who live there.

If you would like more information about the type of applications the Trustees will consider for a grant or how to apply for a grant, please email the Clerk to the Trustees clerk.scnpt@gmail.com or write to 8 Church Street, Sutton Courtenay, OX14 4NJ

APPLICATIONS FOR A GRANT TO ASSIST WITH FINANCIAL HARDSHIP ARE CONSIDERED IN COMPLETE CONFIDENCE

OLLY GLOVER MP

RSPB LOCAL GROUP



July marks one year since I was elected as the MP for our constituency. Learning how parliament operates, establishing a constituency office and recruiting a team took

some time, but I can now reflect on our work over the last 12 months.

Since the election, my team and I have opened over 7,000 cases and responded to 12,500 emails to constituents. Some involve signposting local people to the services they need, but others are more complex and take time to work through. Cases cover many topics, from health and care, to immigration and international trade.

Alongside helping constituents on a personal level, I have been able to use cases and local issues to inform efforts to drive national policy changes. I've been asking questions of Ministers in the House of Commons, speaking in Westminster Hall debates, securing one-to-one meetings with Ministers and taking part in cross party groups: the Transport Select Committee, and the Planning and Infrastructure Bill Committee. These are just some of the ways I have been able to voice your issues to the people with power to influence them. Recent successes include getting a decision on an export licence for local business which saved several jobs.

There has been some progress, too, on the big issues impacting our constituency: I secured a meeting with the rail minister to make the case for Grove Station; the County Council has started work on a feasibility study. I have presented a bill to ensure infrastructure targets accompany housing targets, which the Housing Minister has taken an interest in. Finally, after being rescheduled and delayed by the minister's office, I have secured a meeting with the Water Minister about the SESRO reservoir to make her aware of all local concerns. Of course, on all these and many other local issues, there is more work to do.

Recently, I have had the pleasure of visiting the Cornermen project, based in South Moreton, doing fantastic work to support men's mental health; discussed ideas to get people taking action to reduce their carbon footprint with trustees of local charity myzerocarbon.org at a recent constituency surgery in Wallingford; and attended the South East RFCA Armed Forces Briefing at RAF Benson to learn about the relationships between defence and the wider community, and the critical role in our communities and our future defence played by cadet and reservist schemes.

During the summer, I will be undertaking many visits and holding regular surgeries around the constituency. If you would like to come and meet me, please contact olly.glover.MP@parliament.uk (or leave a voice message at 0207 219 7657). Feel free, as always, to use these contact details for anything else I can help with.

Olly Glover

MP for Didcot and Wantage Constituency

Your RSPB Local Group (Vale of White Horse) is getting ready for the new season starting in September. We are looking forward to welcoming you to our monthly indoor talks (in the River Room, by the



church, Sutton Courtenay, and/or via Zoom in deepest winter) and outdoor wildlife walks.

Quick details of the first talks we have planned running from September to May:

* **15th September**: "What's new at RSPB Otmoor" (Fergus Mosey) - the warden at this special local reserve will present his annual review of highlights - many members' favourite talk! (7.30pm in the River Room)

* **20th October**: The Owl Conservation Project (Lu Barton) - through work with environmental groups, landowners, tenants and education the Project enhances and increases existing habitats for our British Owls and creates new linked habitat networks and highways. Lu's talk will describe this as well as the history, behaviour and population status of British owls, with an opportunity to meet some live, captive-bred owls. (7.30pm in the River Room)

* **November**, exact date tbc: a talk from Prof Andrew Gosler (University of Oxford) who studies human engagement with birds, especially in the context of nature conservation and policy. Andrew is a council member of the British Trust for Ornithology and a Vice-President of the Oxford Ornithological Society

Membership for the 2025-26 season remains at £15 for adults (whether or not you are an RSPB member), and is free for under-16s. This covers our programme of monthly talks and wildlife walks (details to follow), and a quarterly e-Newsletter. If you prefer to attend just one or two talks, you can do this as a non-member for £5 a time You can join using the form on our website (under "Contacts"):www.rspbvwh.org.uk, or at a meeting (bank transfer, cash, cheque).



We meet at the Village Hall, or the Recreation Ground if the weather is good, every Wednesday from 6:30-7:45, and we are open to young people aged 10-18 (Year 6+).

Instagram: Abingdon.damascus.youthproject

Website: www.ycat.org.uk

Email: alfieturner@adyp.onmicrosoft.com

Phone: 07956 038022

DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Hello Sunshine!

It is great to see summer in full swing – it feels like people are happier when it is sunnier, and longer days allow more time outside enjoying the fresh air. Fortunately for freshness, there have been fewer complaints this last quarter of bad smells locally, but plenty of noise complaints - local operators assure us they are within their agreed operating limits, so it may be just with more time in the garden with the windows open we spot it more - I don't know. To help, I have sponsored some budget for Appleford to set up noise monitoring and an independent noise survey which will help pinpoint sources, and provide greater understanding of regular noise levels, ahead of any new developments that might need evidence for mitigations. As well as the new road and bridge over the Thames, there are two new applications for battery energy storage parks nearby - taking advantage of the national transmission grid network connections at Didcot B power station. Whilst a strong supporter of these helping us transition to a clean net zero future, there are concerns with some new technologies so I have called these in to be heard. I have also initiated us into new Local Area Energy Planning to ensure there is joined up thinking rather than random development around the power station.

Recently, I have also been working closely with FCC who own the landfill sites between our villages to ensure paths are kept open and improved for locals. We had a positive meeting this month with Thames Water who have agreed in principle to a project to improve the dilapidated Hobby Horse Lane from Sutton Courtenay to Appleford, and we have gained support from both FCC and Heidelberg so, fingers crossed, improving that long stand eyesore is starting to move forwards.

Last month, gypsy travellers moved onto the Appleford recreation ground worrying locals. Fortunately, there is a hotline and team in the council for especially for helping in these situations. They intervened the very next morning, and professionally helped resolve the situation quickly.

The Post Office has now finished consulting with positive local reaction on moving the post office to a better building with better facilities in Milton Park.

The plans to improve the junction at Steventon with the new developments at Milton Heights for cars, buses and traffic, and also enable safer cycling and walking into Steventon and up to the A34 interchange have also now been approved, and work is due to start this autumn. Highways have agreed to improve the safety of the dangerous Milton Lane exit during this period as traffic will depend on it, but also then leave safety improvements in place afterwards for this junction.

I have also escalated about the Steventon Bridge to see if there any better temporary workarounds to get some two way traffic back while they fix the bridge (which will take a long time as they can only work on it when the line is closed to trains).

In Drayton, fixing the broken speed signs has been frustrating, but I am glad to report design work has begun on a new pedestrian crossing and other safety improvements, including aligning the signs to any new speed limits.

Lastly, now I am Water Champion for the county council, I continue to hold Thames Water to account for improving their strategic plans – which is not just the reservoir but also stopping leaks, and improving recycling and treatment facilities – probably more front of mind now as climate change this year has brought us the hottest driest spring on record. Extreme weather is the new norm, so remember the sun screen and enjoy the summer.

Peter Stevens



CHARITY SWIM

Sutton Courtenay resident, Andrew Brent, will be swimming the English Channel in July to raise money for the Paediatric Critical Care Unit in Oxford. His wife, Bernadette, is organising the raffle. The prizes are fantastic!





AVAILABLE FOR HIRE THE RIVER ROOM

All Saints' Church, Sutton Courtenay OX14 4AE This attractive, light and modern room, with adjacent wellequipped kitchen, entrance foyer & two WCs (one accessible) is perfect for group meetings or private parties. Capacity: 40 seated to 80 standing. Plus – projector, complete A/V system, digital piano

All enquiries: 01235 847179

SUTTON COURTENAY COFE PRIMARY SCHOOL



The Heart of Our School

At Sutton Courtenay CofE Primary School, we believe that the purpose of education is to shape lives, not just lessons. Our intent is bold and

unwavering: to nurture children who are not only academically capable, but emotionally intelligent, morally grounded, and ready to lead with courage and compassion. We are a school where every child is seen, heard, and valued. Where reading opens doors to new worlds, relationships are rooted in trust and empathy, and leadership is cultivated in every pupil-whether through quiet integrity or confident voice. We teach our children to stand up for what is right, to show humanity in their actions, and to develop the resilience, grit, and people skills that will carry them through life. This is more than education-it's formation. It's the privilege of shaping young minds to flourish and thrive, knowing that when we send our Year 6 pupils into the next chapter of their journey, we do so with the confidence that we've given them our very best. That sense of purpose is what makes being part of the Sutton Courtenay staff team a dream job.

Below are the unedited reflections of some of our Year 6 pupils. Their words speak powerfully to the values we live by and the lasting impact of their time with us.

Throughout my time at Sutton Courtenay CofE Primary School, I have learnt three things that I will take with me through life: if you get given an opportunity, take it. If you work hard, you can achieve anything in life and finally, still waters run deep: there is more to people than what meets the eye; give everybody a chance. (Suvi Aitio)

During my time at Sutton Courtenay CofE Primary School, I have learnt a lot about inclusion and diversity and how important it is to celebrate differences (which I am now so passionate about). To be grateful for what we have because nothing lasts forever. Lastly, that the world needs more compassion and kindness if we want it to be a great place and that it starts with me as an individual. (Bea Swan)

During my time at Sutton Courtenay CofE Primary School, I learnt that everyone deserves to be happy and accepted for who they are. I have learnt that everyone is a leader if they are given the opportunity to be, despite leaders all having different approaches. Finally, to use our voice to make a positive impact on the world. (Satvick Jaichandran)

SCHOOL LIBRARY SUPPORT

The editor has heard that the school would very much like donations of books for the new school library. There is a wishlist for those who are interested in supporting the school in this way. It is stored on Amazon.co.uk, although you can purchase elsewhere. Unfortunately, we are unable to give an address in print. The link is Amazon.co.uk and to use it you will need to access this page of this edition of SCN on-line at https://suttoncourtenaynews.co.uk



Raluca Chende

Headteacher, Sutton Courtenay CofE Primary School office@sutton-courtenay.school Telephone: 01235 848333



S C CYCLE

FREE LARGE-SIZE SOLAR COOKER

1.5m diameter parabolic reflector – enjoy some free outdoor cooking this summer with the heat of the sun (put the food in a bowl at the focus of the reflector and it will cook)!

WhatsApp/SMS 07761 375991



The Abbey Café

Bring your friends and enjoy a selection of delicious homemade cakes or a light brunch in our beautiful medieval hall with live piano music.

We are open every Saturday from 10 am to 2pm. Please note that occasionally the café won't be held in the Great Hall if we are hosting a retreat or another event. But we're pleased to let you know that we will do our best to offer you some treats from our 'Abbey Café Van' in the grounds. So, check our website and social media for any updates.

Saturday talks at The Abbey

Last year, we were pleased to launch our Saturday talks as part of our educational programme. You can find the full list of events on our website and social media pages.

In July, we welcome Revd Margreet Armitstead for the last talk of the summer. She is a trained spiritual director and her life was transformed through the 30 day Ignatian Exercises in St Beuno's in 2014. She will share with you the key teachings of Ignatian spirituality, a spirituality for everyday life.

Please book for this event on Eventbrite (link on our website).

We're open to approaches too, so please contact us if you have an idea for a suitable talk or a workshop. These events will be held in the Library from 11am to 1pm on Saturdays (or 10am to 4pm for a workshop).

Volunteering at the Abbey

The walled garden

We are developing a great team of volunteer gardeners. If you have a few hours to spare each week and want to help us care for our beautiful walled garden, we'd love to hear from you.

'SATURDAY TALKS AT THE ABBEY'

"Here I am as I am"

Saturday 19th July 2025, 11am-1pm



Margreet Armitstead trained as a teacher in The Netherlands, moved to England age 24, spent five years in Hongkong and got ordained in 2003. She is a trained spiritual director. Her life was transformed through the 30 day Ignatian Exercises in St Beuno's in 2014. She is married to Julian, a creative writer, and has two grown-up children.

How do we discern who we are meant to be in this world? Ignatian spirituality contains the wisdom and the tools for this transforming discernment. A morning of stories, experiences and reflections.

Price: £10 (including coffee/tea). Please book for this event on Eventbrite: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ 1316418646609 All proceeds from this event will be donated to the Abbey charity.







You are warnly invited to try it out for yourself with a friendly welcoming group or at home with the Heartfulness app.



Free of charges and open to all over 18. For more info contact: Oxfordshire@heartfulness.uk

Registered Charity Number 1128649 in England & Wales, SC038615 in Scotland

Gardening experience is not necessary but would be helpful. Come and spend time in this special garden and enjoy working with other volunteers and making new friends.

Meditation at the Abbey

The Abbey offers an opportunity to come to stillness in tranquil and beautiful surroundings with a supportive group.

Meditation can help us to feel more connected, balanced and at peace. Heartfulness is a very simple and natural way which guides participants to focus on a deeper source within our hearts and to experience harmony within. It is always offered freely.

The meetings take place on Wednesdays at 7pm for 30-45 minutes in the Abbey. All are welcome regardless of experience.

(More information at www. heartfulness.org.uk)

Accommodation

The Abbey can accommodate up to 25 people for residential stays. We have 5 twin and 4 single rooms in The Abbey Garden Lodge and 2 twin, 2 double and 3 single rooms in The Abbey main building. The Garden Lodge can also be booked for independent self-catering stays via Airbnb.

Please contact Pascaline at: welcome@theabbey.uk.com or by phone: +44 (0)1235 242 283 for any questions. You can also visit our FB page "The Abbey Sutton Courtenay" or our Instagram account: @theabbeysuttoncourtenay

THE ABBEY OFFICE OPENING TIMES: 9AM - 1PM weekdays

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH



St Peter's, Drayton St Peter & St Paul, Appleford St Blaise, Milton All Saints', Sutton Courtenay St Michael and All Angels, Steventon

From the Ministry Team

The monthly letter from the DAMASCUS ministry team is

written and sent to everyone in the DAMASCUS Parish; Drayton And Milton, Appleford, Sutton CoUrtenay, Steventon. Each village has its own magazine, and each one is as unique as the community there. Earlier this year I wrote about how fortunate our villages are to have the many social and recreational opportunities which enrich our community. I encouraged more support and help for the volunteers because, without them, our communities would be poorer.

Parish

What does community mean to you? The Oxford English dictionary gives community the definition of "shared ownership". Other dictionaries give community to mean "people who live in a particular area. The importance of community, in Christian faith, has been and is still strongly held. St Paul wrote letters to the first Christian communities scattered around the Mediterranean, supporting them in the beginnings of the early church. In one of his first letters he writes to the Thessalonians "Encourage each other with these words and build each other up." (1 Thessalonians 4:18, 5:11) And to the people in Corinth he wrote," Encourage one another and be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you." (2 Corinthians 13:11). The supporting of one another, in terms of faith, continues in a variety of ways.

This autumn, there will be a course "The Bible for Beginners" being run by the DAMASCUS ministry team. "The Bible for Beginners" has something for everyone and aims to encourage and build up our faith and to encourage and support those seeking faith. Look out for more information coming soon on notice boards and web pages in your community! Our places of worship are meant to be somewhere to find and feel "shared ownership", a sense of belonging as part of the community. Fortunately, there is a church in each of the five villages where not only worship but community can be shared in moments of joy and of sadness, celebration and remembrance.

I finish with a prayer of thanksgiving for our community of villages and for our community of faith: Heavenly Father, thank you for our village and for every person who lives here. Help us to care more for our community, to share your love, and to stand for your truth. Amen

The Reverend Rosie Bruce,

Associate Minister in the DAMASCUS Parish

CHURCH DIARY FOR JULY

Thurs 3rd – 11:15-12:30 WeCare2, River Room Sat 5th - 9:30-11:30 Community Brunch, River Room Thurs 10th – 10:30-12:00 Community Cafe, River Room. 19:30 Together in Stitches, River Room Mon 14th – 19:30 DAMASCUS Parochial Church Council Meeting, Appleford Church Thurs 17th - 11:15-12:30 WeCare2, River Room Tues 22nd – 9:30 Sutton Courtenay CofE Primary School Leavers' Service, All Saints' Church Thurs 24th - 10:30-12:00 Community Cafe, River Room Sat 26th – 16:00 Movie Matinee, River Room

CHURCH DIARY FOR AUGUST

Sat 2nd – 9:30-11:30 Community Brunch, River Room **Tues 5th -** 9:30 – 11:00 Stay and Play in the River Room (see advert for details). Thurs 7th –11:15-12:30 WeCare2, River Room Sat 9th - 13:00 Wedding, All Saints' Church

Thurs 14th - 10:30-12:00 Community Cafe, River Room. 19:30 Together in Stitches, River Room

Fri 15th – 9:30 – 11:00 Stay and Play in the River Room (see advert for details).

16:00 Wedding, All Saints' Church

Tues 19th - 10-13:00 Summer Journey for Families, St Michael's, Steventon

Thurs 21st - 10-13:00 Summer Journey for Families, River Room, SC.

11:15-12:30 WeCare2 (Venue to be confirmed - contact Parish Office)

Sat 23rd – 13:00 Wedding, All Saints Church. 16:00 Movie Matinee, River Room

Wed 27th – 10-1pm Summer Journey for Families, St Peter's, Drayton

Thurs 28th - 10:30-12:00 Community Cafe, River Room Sat 30th - 18:00 Opera Anywhere is bringing 'The Mikado' to All Saints' Church - tickets? see advert for details. Cash bar and all proceeds will go to our Tower and Bell Appeal. **Sun 31st –** 11:00 Family Communion Service followed by 'bring-and-share BBQ' in the River Room to mark the end of the holidays and the start of the new school year - all welcome!

FOR SEPTEMBER

Sat 13th – 10:00-18:00- Ride and Stride – cycle or walk around the churches in Oxfordshire to raise money for the OHCT and All Saints' Church. Please see poster Page 11.

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

Services of Worship

1st Sunday: Family service at 11:00 am 2nd Sunday: Parish Eucharist at 11:00am +Junior Church 3rd Sunday: Morning Worship at 11:00am + Junior Church 4th Sunday: Parish Eucharist at 11:00am + Junior Church 5th Sunday: Special services across the Damascus Parish – please see church noticeboard for details

Holy Baptism

We send our best wishes & congratulations to the following who were welcomed into the family of the church through baptism:

Frederick (Freddie) Michael James CUNDEY (8th June 2025) Jack Beau Richard BARCLAY (15th June 2025) All services conducted by the Reverend Canon Helen Kendrick

Rest in Peace

We send our condolences and the assurance of our prayers to the family and friends of the following people who died: Averil Margaret SAWLEY, who died 2^{nd} May 2025 (see *obituary page 14*)

Retirement of the Reverend Phil Sutton

After over seven years of ministry in the DAMASCUS Parish the Reverend Phil Sutton will be retiring from parish ministry on **Sunday 28th September 2025** at a special service at **9:30 in St Michael and All Angels, Steventon.**

All are welcome (humans and dogs) to come and say thank you to Phil, and to his wife Jane, for their ministry amongst us.

If you would like to contribute to a retirement gift then please contact the parish office, 01235 847179. *There will be no other service in the parish on this day.*

Community Café in the River Room

Run by the church for the whole community Thursday 10th July Thursday 24th July Thursday 24th August Thursday 28th August from 10:30-12:00 all welcome!

Why not drop by for coffee or tea & delicious homemade cake & conversation and to browse the books or jigsaw puzzles on offer? Open to all – a good place to meet with friends or make new ones. If you need transport to and from the River Room please 'phone the Parish Office on 01235 847179 **Update** - The Vicar's Fun Day made a total profit of £1648.91 which will go towards our Tower and Bells Appeal. So, an ENORMOUS thank you to everyone who made the Vicar's Fun Day on 26th May possible. From the team on the Green, led by Brian Blakeman, setting up the gazebos and putting out the tables and chairs; all the stallholders who worked so hard; Abbey Brass; Jon the Sound Man; the Red Barrows; Jon the Tower Crier; the team on the Green who put everything away again; all those who baked cakes; all those who donated bottles and raffle prizes and



quality gifts; and not forgetting everyone who came and supported the event. It was wonderful to see so many new faces from across the village. **THANK YOU SO MUCH!**

ANYONE INTERESTED IN HELPING WITH THE VICAR'S FUN DAY NEXT YEAR PLEASE GET IN TOUCH!

We need to raise approximately £150,000 to carry out the work on the Tower and Bells and are currently working on grant applications and obtaining the necessary permissions. If you would like to donate to our appeal then contributions can be sent via Bank Transfer to DAMASCUS PCC. 00031419. 40-52-40. Quoting ref. SCTABA or by cash or cheque payable to the DAMASCUS PCC, c/o The Parish Office, All Saints' Church, Sutton Courtenay, Abingdon, OX14 4AE. Thank you.

DAMASCUS Parish online prayer meeting

A time to gather together online to praise our Father God, to listen to Jesus, and to join the Spirit in interceding for each other, our community, our country, our world.

Interested? We meet on-line every Tuesday at 07.45 - 08.15

Please contact: DAMASCUSonlineprayer@gmail.com



"they raised their voices together in prayer to God... After they prayed....." things began to happen! Acts 4:24,31

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in St Peter's Church Room, Drayton Wednesdays 7.30-8.45pm starting 17th September All Welcome!



COMMUNITY BRUNCH is happening 9:30-11:30 in the River Room, All Saints' Church Saturday 5th July & Saturday 2nd August Bacon and Sausage Butties with Vegetarian and GF/Dairy Free options. Croissants and pastries. Fruit and Granola.

Fruit Juice. And plenty of coffee and tea! FREE - ALL WELCOME! (Donations welcome – surplus funds go to the Abingdon Food Bank)

MOVIE MATINEES

The next two Movie Matinees in the River Room are on

Saturday 26th July – 4pm & Saturday 23rd August – 4pm For a full programme to be sent to you please email: admin@damascusparish.org.uk or pick one up from the back of the church



Summer Journeys

COME AND JOIN US TO EXPLORE THE BIBLE BY MOUNTAINS, ROADS AND THE SEASIDE

Tuesday 19th August – St Michael & All Angels Steventon Thursday 21st August – All Saints' Sutton Courtenay Wednesday 27th August – St Peter's Drayton

10am to 1pm (lunch included) Free event for families. Booking required. Search DAMASCUS Parish on Eventbrite



The Green, Sutton Courtenay OX14 4AE

Tickets: £15/£22

Box Office: OperaAnywhere.com 0333 666 3366 A Fundraising event for registered charity The DAMASCUS PCC charity no: 1175551

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Together in Stitches

Do you wish you could find time for craft projects? Would you like a fun evening, meeting likeminded people in Sutton Courtenay? If so, Together in Stitches is for you!



Bring your craft project, whatever that may be, & come & enjoy a chat (and possibly a glass of wine) Second Thursday in the month (7:30-9pm, River Room) For more information 'phone 01235 847179 or just turn up!

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Afternoons of chat and craft

Come along with your own knitting / sewing / craft and enjoy free refreshments and company.

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Tel: 01235 847179 for more information

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This is a small and gentle group welcoming people with dementia, their carers and those older members in the village who live alone and would enjoy an hour in company.

We meet in the River Room, All Saints' Church, Sutton Courtenay on the first and third Thursday each month, from 11.15 to 12.30. Transport can be arranged if needed.

The group has a cup of coffee/tea and we try varied armchair exercises and then finally sing together some well-known traditional songs.

Music is recognised as being so beneficial to positive mental activity.

If you are interested and would like more information please phone/contact

Morna 07787 521039/morna28whitlock@gmail.com



Saturday 13th September 2025

Walk or cycle around Oxfordshire churches to raise money for the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust and for All Saints' Church, Sutton Courtenay. For more information and ideas on routes see

ohct.org.uk/ride-and-stride

It's a great way to get to see the Oxfordshire countryside and its churches and to raise money to help look after our 12th century church.

Please contact All Saints' for a Sponsor Form 01235 847179 or admin@damascusparish.org.uk

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Become a Bereavement Support Worker with Sobell House and support someone who has suffered the loss of a loved one.

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This is the website address:

sobellhouse.org/volunteer/bereavement-support-worker/

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

We are very lucky, as a village, to be surrounded by footpaths, bridleways, and byways that allow us to access the surrounding countryside, towns and villages without using our cars. But too often, we take these routes for granted.

I experienced this first-hand recently, when the access to Kelaart's field and Milton Park via Tyrrells Way was blocked by a new fence.

Like many others in the village, this route has been an important part of my daily life. It helps people in our community to get to work and school, access services such as the pharmacy and post office on Milton Park, walk their dogs, and travel to Didcot, Abingdon, and beyond.

I appreciate that the landowner is within their rights to prevent access, as this is not an official right of way. But it seems clear, from my conversations with other residents, that there has been access to the footpath this way for decades.

As with many things, people will have different views. However, I would encourage anyone who is in favour of keeping this route open to sign the petition which is available in the Costcutter shop on Bradstocks Way until the end of July.







Milton Methodist Church Hall Milton High Street, OX14 4EJ



Another lovely Milton Minors Playgroup session today.

Every Wednesday 9/30 till 11/30am.

Come along and join us!

£4 per session including refreshments.

BRIDGE AFTERNOONS Starting again on Friday 5th September

Come and play bridge on Friday afternoons in the River Room from 2-5pm with a cup of tea & a piece of cake - £5 Tables, cards and score cards all provided Just come along and we make up tables based on experience/choice. All standards of play welcome – from experienced players to those who are 'just in need of a refresher', 'very rusty' or learning. Rubber or Chicago – you choose Come and join us



We are a friendly community choir with an excellent music director. There is no audition, and it is not necessary to be able to read music.

Please visit our website for details www.allsaintssingers.org or phone to find out more 07870 506774 Rehearsals start 5th Sept 2025 in the Matrix Arts Centre

Luke Micallef

THE SUTTON COURTENAY CRAFT AND PRODUCE SHOW 2025

The Village Hall Saturday 6th September 2025

Entry drop off between 9:45 and 11:00. Late entries will not be accepted. Items cannot have been exhibited previously.

The show is open for viewing at 13:30.

The schedule was published in the Sutton Courtenay News in April and can be found at suttoncourtenaynews.co.uk



Rest in Peace

Averil Margaret Sawley, who died (aged 90) on 2nd May 2025 was born on 9th May 1934 on the Isle of Wight, the only child of her parents, Frederick and Ellen.

The family moved to Sutton Courtenay when her father got a job as a printer in Abingdon. Averil was still a baby when they rented in Abingdon, and then bought Number 24 High Street Sutton Courtenay for the grand sum of £600; Averil lived there for the rest of her 90 years. She attended Sutton Courtenay Primary School and was confirmed at All Saints' Church in 1946. She was an active member of the Girl Guides. From an early age she inherited a great love of football from her Dad and liked nothing better than watching and supporting Oxford United, and in later years she was an avid listener to the football commentary on Radio Oxford.

A bright and intelligent girl, Averil passed her 11+ exam and went to Wallingford Grammar School before attending Teacher Training College in Reading in 1952. She qualified as a teacher in 1954 when she was just 20 years old and went to work at Launton Primary School, near Bicester, where she spent the rest of her working life in a long and fulfilling teaching career, which she greatly enjoyed, spanning 35 years.

Her love of home was so deeply ingrained that, although she had to board in Bicester during the week, she would drive back to Sutton Courtenay every weekend in her Morris Minor. In her own words, she never met 'Mr Right' but enjoyed her close friendships, especially with her neighbour and great friend, Dolly, and her family. Averil took early retirement to care for her parents in their old age, and, after their death, she renovated Number 24 with the help of her good friend Roy Davies, who became her handy man and a great support. Her cousin, Sue and her husband John, came into Averil's life over the last 30 years and Averil enjoyed spending time with them and their family and keeping in touch with all that they were doing. She also enjoyed being taken to Portsmouth to visit other family members every year and enjoyed regular trips out to lunch with Sue and John.

The last few years of her life were difficult for Averil and those trying to care for her, but, with her own steely determination and the help of her very kind neighbour, Sue Hyde, and family and other friends, Averil was able to remain living independently at the home which she loved. She was a private person, with a quiet faith, determinedly independent, someone who knew what she liked and who you could never tell what to do – some might say she was stubborn – but perhaps it was this inner strength that kept her going! She was always an early bird – not to be disturbed after 5pm but up very early in the morning. She had the most beautiful handwriting and was a great letter writer. Sadly, she broke her hip 18 months ago and then suffered a final, fatal fall at home. She died in hospital on 2^{nd} May.

This is an edited extract from the address given at her funeral by The Reverend Canon Helen Kendrick at All Saint's Church, Sutton Courtenay on Thursday 29th May 2025.



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