

# SUTTON COURTENAY NEWS

VOLUME 55 No. 2

MARCH 2026



Photograph by  
James Franks see page 16

## VILLAGE DIARY FOR MARCH

Tue 3	Parish Council Meeting (p. 5)	Village Hall	19:15
Every Wed	ADYP Drop-in (p. 11)	Village Hall	18:30
Thur 5 & 19	WeCare2 (p. 10)	River Room	11:15-12:30
Fri 6 & 20	Bridge Afternoon (p. 12)	River Room	14:00-17:00
Sat 7	Community Brunch (p. 10)	River Room	9:30-11:30
Every Sat	The Abbey Café (p. 7)	The Abbey	10:00-14:00
Sat 7	Friends of All Saints' Quiz Evening (11)	Village Hall	19:30
Thur 12 & 26	Community Café (p. 10)	River Room	10:30-12:00
Thur 12	Together in Stitches (p. 10)	River Room	19:30-21:00
Fri 13 & Sat 14	SCIDS – Charlie (p. 11)	Village Hall	See advert
Sun 15	Yamaha Open Day (p. 14)	Matrix	From 10:00
Mon 16	Knit & Natter (p. 9)	River Room	14:00-16:00
Tue 17	Tuesday Club (p. 12)	River Room	19:30
Mon 23	First Aid Course for the over 60s (p. 10)	River Room	10:30
Sat 28	Movie Matinée (p. 10)	River Room	16:00
Sun 29	Sutton Courtenay Singers Concert (p. 11)	Church	19:00

Previous copies of SCN are available on the website under Archives at [suttoncourtenaynews.co.uk](http://suttoncourtenaynews.co.uk)

**APRIL 2026 SCN DEADLINE – WEDNESDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2026**

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

## VILLAGE CONTACTS

Parish Council: Clerk, 07496 924 685  
[info@suttoncourtenay-pc.gov.uk](mailto:info@suttoncourtenay-pc.gov.uk)

Stay & Play Toddler Group: Facebook page: [@SCstayandplay](https://www.facebook.com/SCstayandplay)

Friends of All Saints'-Chair: Sue Jenkins 07885 437454

Matrix Music School: 847264

The Abbey: 847401

Village Hall – SC: [scvillagehallbookings@googlemail.com](mailto:scvillagehallbookings@googlemail.com)

Cricket Club: [drb71@hotmail.co.uk](mailto: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 [sclhs.org.uk](mailto:sclhs.org.uk)  
[enquiries@sclhs.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@sclhs.org.uk)

SCIDS (Drama Society): Sally Dubock, 847707  
[sallydubock@gmail.com](mailto:sallydubock@gmail.com)

Sutton Courtenay Singers: Kathy Harrop-Griffiths, 848230  
[secretary@suttoncourtenaysingers.org](mailto:secretary@suttoncourtenaysingers.org)  
[www.suttoncourtenaysingers.org](http://www.suttoncourtenaysingers.org)

Sutton Courtenay Action: [suttoncourtenayaction@gmail.com](mailto:suttoncourtenayaction@gmail.com)

Non-urgent Police, 101 or policing team email:  
[AbingdonOuterNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk](mailto:AbingdonOuterNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk)

Environment Agency: Landfill Odours 0800 80 70 60  
[www.gov.uk/report-smell](http://www.gov.uk/report-smell)

Thames Water (leaks): 0800 71 46 14

Thames Water Customer Service: 0800 316 9800

Police Anonymous Hotline: 0800 555 111

Power Cuts: 105

**Websites:**

Sutton Courtenay News: [www.suttoncourtenaynews.co.uk](http://www.suttoncourtenaynews.co.uk)

Parish Council: [www.suttoncourtenay-pc.gov.uk](http://www.suttoncourtenay-pc.gov.uk)

Vale of White Horse DC: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

Oxfordshire CC: [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Village Hall: [suttoncourtenayvillagehall.co.uk](http://suttoncourtenayvillagehall.co.uk)

Action Fraud: [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)

Citizens Advice: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

## ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

### The Ministry Team

Rector: The Reverend Helen Kendrick  
The Rectory, 3, Tullis Close, Sutton Courtenay, OX14 4BD  
Office: 01235 847179 Home: 01235 848297  
Mobile: 07443 524216 [rector@damascusparish.org.uk](mailto:rector@damascusparish.org.uk)

Assistant Curate: The Reverend Dov Whittle  
07586 969985 [curate@damascusparish.org.uk](mailto:curate@damascusparish.org.uk)

Assistant Priest: The Reverend Rosie Bruce  
07707 087131 [rosie-bruce@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:rosie-bruce@hotmail.co.uk)

Churchwarden & Pro-Warden: Alison Budd [alison@pbudd.me](mailto:alison@pbudd.me)

Pro-Warden: Mary Warrington [contrary63@gmail.com](mailto:contrary63@gmail.com)

Parish Administrator: Alison Bampton. 01235 847179  
[admin@damascusparish.org.uk](mailto:admin@damascusparish.org.uk)

The DAMASCUS Parish Office, All Saints' Church, The Green,  
Sutton Courtenay, Abingdon, OX14 4AE

For Services of Worship – Please see Page 8

## 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](http://suttoncourtenayvillagehall.co.uk) and follow the on-screen prompts. If you need to contact the booking clerk please email: [scvillagehallbookings@googlemail.com](mailto: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](mailto:editor@suttoncourtenaynews.co.uk) or [scmail07@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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 9:00 to 17:30 with a final collection time of 16:45. It is closed on Saturday & Sunday. Further afield there are Post Offices in Didcot (in TG Jones, 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.



## DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

News from the council this month centres on the budget which must be worked out to balance, in spite of rising costs and budget cuts from central government's new fair deal, which hits Oxfordshire. All services have been protected because the county's finances are actually strong and well managed. Not much new investment except we found some more money for repairing gullies, as this year's long-needed cleaning of 70,000 gullies uncovered a raft of problems which need to be fixed.

Closure of Redbridge waste recycling centre for urgent remedial work has required the council to introduce a booking system across the county's other recycling centres to manage demand whilst work is completed. I have the assurance of the relevant cabinet member that this is temporary, and it will be reviewed when the work is completed and Redbridge re-opens. Personally, I am worried that putting obstacles in the path of recycling may lead to more fly-tipping (which is illegal), so please keep an eye out for this so I can report any impacts back. People can book 30 minutes before their visit or up to two weeks in advance. To help Oxfordshire recycle even more people are asked to sort their recyclable items from their waste either before they arrive, which will speed up their visit, or they can use the sorting area on site. On a similar note, the massive illegal dump next to the A34 near Kidlington will be cleaned up in March.

The relevant place planning officer came to talk to local residents to explain the Steventon Lights and Steventon Bridge works. Work is ongoing to try to minimise the impact of the road works, and attendees and the parish asked for consideration of a weight limit and traffic lights for the bridge, which will be considered. The road works will be completed before work starts on the new HIF1 road later in the year. HIF1 will provide better access from the A34 to Didcot and over the Thames to the Culham Campus and beyond, removing the rat run through Milton and Sutton Courtenay.

I have setup a new working group which Olly Glover MP has agreed to chair to ensure the construction of HIF1 does not ostracise any community and that heavy construction traffic is kept to safe routes. This road should leave a lasting legacy, and I am keen to see it does, using it to leverage improvements to footpath, cycle routes and the Appleford train station.

This month, the council is also going to repair the walking and cycling route between Sutton Courtenay over the Thames bridge to Culham and Europa, which has been notorious for children and parents going to and from school, weaving between the rush hour jams. The work will require some traffic management 23-28<sup>th</sup> March. Following further recent incidents, I am now pushing for a safer crossing at the Sutton Courtenay T-junction, which along with the funded and planned Tollgate Road T-junction project should make this whole route much safer. This will be further enhanced when the HIF1 road bridge opens and most traffic switch to the new bridge.

Local government reorganisation (LGR) is the process of reshaping how local public services are organised, governed and delivered. The government wants to make it easier for residents to know where to go for help by replacing our current two-tier district and county system with a simpler, more efficient single tier council structure. Three options have been presented and are now in public consideration. If you have time or have any strong opinions, please do contribute this month.

Lastly, I would like to promote warm homes grants. Cold damp dangerous housing is responsible for increases in respiratory problems, cardiovascular ill health and problems in childhood development. It costs the NHS £1.4 billion a year. There are warm home grants available to fund energy efficiency upgrades - such as insulation and solar panels - for eligible homeowners and private tenants. They are on first come, first served basis. For more information, please [Contact the Retrofit Team | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

**Peter Stevens**  
Councillor

### SC (NATIONAL POWER) TRUST

#### Do you need financial help?

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

- The Trust is a charity based in Sutton Courtenay.
- It can make grants to individuals living in Sutton Courtenay and organisations based in Sutton Courtenay which operate for the benefit of the residents of the civil parish of Sutton Courtenay.
- Grants MAY be available to assist with a number of charitable purposes e.g. personal financial hardship, education, illness, charitable activities that benefit Sutton Courtenay residents.

For more information, in confidence, about the type of applications the Trustees will consider or how to apply for a grant, please email the Clerk to the Trustees [clerk.scnpt@gmail.com](mailto:clerk.scnpt@gmail.com) or write to:  
8 Church Street, Sutton Courtenay, OX14 4NJ.



## Hobbyhorse Lane North Site

Savills, who is acting as the consultants on behalf of HarperCrewe Ltd to develop the Hobbyhorse Lane North site, should be at the Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2026. Their presentation will start at 7pm, before the main Parish Council meeting. Please check the Parish Council's website for any changes. A number of residents were disappointed when they arrived at the November 2025 meeting only to learn that Savills had had to postpone the presentation.

## 2026 Community Litter Pick – Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April

Following the success of the October litter pick and considering feedback from people who would like to be involved in future events. The next litter pick will be held on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at 2pm. Everyone is welcome to join Councillors in litter picking designated areas of the village. Equipment is provided on the day. On your return to the Village Hall there will be refreshments.

## Proposal for new unitary councils in Oxfordshire

The Vale of the White Horse District Council is asking residents to respond to the Government's consultation to reorganise the County and District Councils.

The government has launched a consultation on options to reorganise County and District councils across Oxfordshire and West Berkshire. Local Government Reorganisation is a government-led reform to change how councils in two-tier areas are structured, replacing county and district councils with single unitary structures responsible for local services, and the upcoming consultation asks residents for their views on each of the three proposals put forward for Oxfordshire.

This consultation will inform the government's decision later in the year on which proposal to implement. The change in council structures provides an opportunity to transform how councils work to deliver services, drive economic growth and support local communities.

In late 2025, a clear consensus emerged when five councils in Oxfordshire and West Berkshire formally supported a proposal for two new, innovative, responsive and locally accountable unitary authorities to address current inefficiencies, enhance services, and save millions. They agreed that the two-unitary model offers the best outcomes for local residents and have urged the government to adopt it when making its decision later in the year.

The clear benefits of the two-unitary proposal put it ahead of the other options:

**Delivering better services:** The proposal responds to what residents, businesses and public sector partners say needs improving, from highways and social care to planning.

**The best financial outcomes:** Delivers significant potential savings (£59.8m annually) and carries the lowest financial risk of all three proposals, helping to protect key services, avoid

cuts and ensure long-term stability across Oxfordshire and West Berkshire.

**Boosting both rural and urban economies:** Drives fast-paced, sustainable growth across Oxford, market towns and rural areas, creating more jobs, better transport and the right homes in the right places.

**Creates councils more responsive to their communities:** Keeps councils close to all local communities and tailored to their specific needs, ensuring strong local accountability and representation.

Forming two unitary councils has the potential to save money by re-imagining and redesigning services across a sensible geography, making use of scale and local delivery where it works best. The two-unitary approach would create authorities that are big enough to be efficient, stable, and reliable, but small enough to care for and be responsive to communities.

During decision-making last year, the councils raised concerns about the other proposals.

For the single-unitary proposal, they expressed concerns that it was too large and too remote from communities and that it did not show the ambition local communities and businesses deserved. Additional concerns have since been raised about whether services with a county-wide footprint, such as highways maintenance, are sustainable and can be funded at that scale, given cuts proposed in recent budgets.

For the three-unitary proposal, they expressed concerns that it would not create financially sustainable councils, would fail to meet the government criteria, and would negatively impact Oxford and damage the green belt.

The government intends to decide on which structure is implemented in Oxfordshire before the government's summer recess in July. The preferred model is expected to be fully operational in 2028, replacing the current county and district councils.

Residents can take part in the consultation by visiting <https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/oxfordshire>

The consultation is open from 5<sup>th</sup> February to 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026. Respondents can either take part in an online survey or write directly to government with their views.

Residents can read the full two-unitary proposal or a shortened version on the website [www.twocouncils.org](http://www.twocouncils.org). The proposal covers all the key points, including how services will be run, financial modelling, implementation plans, and the vision for the future.

The other two proposals can be found at:

**Single unitary proposal –** [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oneoxfordshire](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oneoxfordshire)

**Three unitary proposal –** [www.oxford.gov.uk/three-councils](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/three-councils)

## Councillor Vacancies

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 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 (defibs, 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 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 7<sup>th</sup> April, 5<sup>th</sup> May, and 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2026. Meetings normally start at 7.15pm and are 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](http://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.

Correspondence should be sent to the Clerk, Sutton Courtenay Parish Council, Innovation Centre, 99 Park Drive, Milton, OX14 4RY, [info@suttoncourtenay-pc.gov.uk](mailto:info@suttoncourtenay-pc.gov.uk) 07496 924 685. Alternatively, you can contact Councillors directly, their email addresses are on the 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](mailto:graymar.wells@btopenworld.com)

## OLLY GLOVER MP



Following the fourth wettest January on record, I am not surprised to have received a flurry of concerns about potholes and flooding from across the constituency. While individual cases are all followed up, I have also been looking into longer term solutions and funding.

With services such as adult social care experiencing huge levels of demand, and Oxfordshire County Council facing a £24.1 million cut in government funding, I raised the need for additional resources to repair potholes at Prime Minister's Questions. I didn't get much of an answer, but I will continue working with our local councils to secure the funding required to keep our roads, cycle paths, and pavements safe and serviceable.

In Parliament, I also questioned a Home Office minister about the mishandling of a domestic violence case by Thames Valley Police, highlighted the lack of safe cycle routes along the A417 and A338, and spoke about the impact of changes to Indefinite Leave to Remain rules on valued employees in local scientific businesses. I was pleased to present a bill to create a Rail Passengers' Charter, aimed at securing better train services, including high-speed Wi-Fi, improved accessibility at stations like Cholsey, and adequate seating for passengers. Train travel isn't cheap, and passengers deserve a better deal.

It was great to welcome Dark Horse Roastery and Hendred Vineyard to Parliament in January as part of an event promoting Oxfordshire's independent hospitality businesses. I also had the pleasure of meeting students from Uffington Primary School during their visit to the House of Commons. Schools and other groups that would like an educational tour of Parliament can learn more at [www.parliament.uk/education](http://www.parliament.uk/education) or email me if you need a hand to book a visit.

Returning to the issue of water, I wrote to the Environment Secretary requesting a meeting to discuss the spiralling costs of the proposed reservoir, which appear to undermine the business case for allowing Thames Water to proceed with such a large project, one that bill payers would ultimately fund. We have, however, had some success with Thames Water on a smaller scale. For example, they joined me, business leaders from Didcot, the Environment Agency, and local councils to unblock measures needed to prevent flooding on Milton Park and Trident Business Park.

As always, if there is anything you feel I can help with, please do not hesitate to contact me and my team at [olly.glover.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:olly.glover.mp@parliament.uk) or by leaving a voice message on 0207 219 7657.

**Olly Glover, MP for Didcot and Wantage**



**Life at Sutton Courtenay CofE Primary School** has been wonderfully busy and filled with purpose. Each week brings new moments that remind us why a village school, rooted in strong values, is such a powerful place for children to learn and grow.

Recently, our pupils took part in **Safer Internet Day workshops**, working with The Cyber Champions to explore what it means to stay safe, kind and responsible online. Their thoughtful discussions showed maturity beyond their years and reflected the culture of compassion and responsibility we nurture across the school.

Our **Year 1 and 2 pupils** represented Sutton Courtenay CofE brilliantly at a county Cricket Festival, demonstrating teamwork, enthusiasm and excellent behaviour. Meanwhile, **Year 3 visited the Ashmolean Museum**, returning inspired and full of questions as they prepare to dive deeper into their Egyptians learning. These opportunities enrich learning far beyond the classroom.

A significant part of this term has been our focus on **Children's Mental Health**, exploring emotions, resilience, empathy and the tools children can use to support themselves and others. Wellbeing continues to be woven through our curriculum — from PSHE and Zones of Regulation to assemblies, pupil leadership and everyday classroom practice.

Our **Personal Development curriculum** is thriving, and it has been a joy to see so many of our children take up leadership roles, support younger pupils and confidently articulate our school ethos. Alongside this, our teacher and pupil-led clubs — choir, reading club, football, skipping, Lego club, games and art club— have been full of energy and joy. These activities build friendships, confidence and the sense of belonging that sits at the heart of a village school.

One of the greatest successes this year has been the growing strength of our **reading culture**. More children are reading for pleasure, talking passionately about books and making ambitious choices in their reading. Our expectations are high and clear: every child is a reader, and every child deserves access to rich stories that broaden their world. This shift is visible in classroom discussions, library visits and the sheer excitement children show when choosing new books.

It has also been wonderful to see an increasing number of **new families choosing Sutton Courtenay CofE Primary School** for their children. We are proud that so many families recommend our school to friends and neighbours; it is one of the strongest signs that the culture we are building is one people recognise, value and trust.

What stands out most across the term are the small, everyday

moments that define who we are — a child comforting a friend, older pupils supporting younger ones, staff modelling calm professionalism, and families offering encouragement. These interactions weave together to create the warm, ambitious, inclusive school we are proud to be.

Thank you to everyone in the village for your ongoing support, your kind words and your belief in the work we are doing. A village school thrives when its community stands beside it, and we feel that partnership every day.

## **Raluca Chende**

Headteacher, Sutton Courtenay CofE Primary School

[office@sutton-courtenay.school](mailto:office@sutton-courtenay.school)

Telephone: 01235 848333

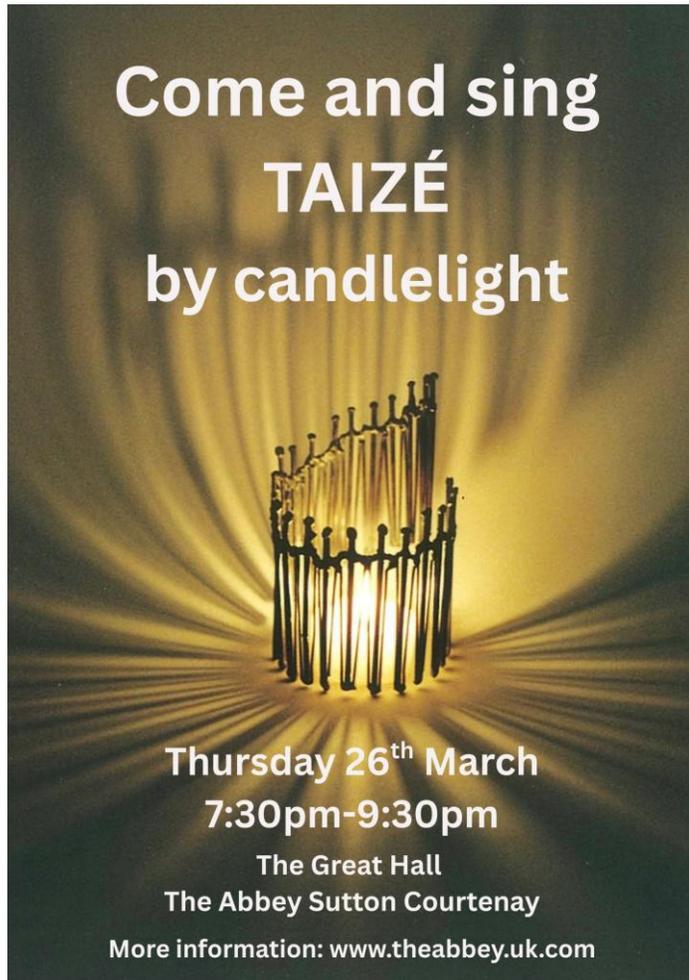


## Taizé by candlelight

An old favourite returns to the Abbey on Thursday 26 March, from 7:30pm to 9:30pm. An evening of Taizé chants, sacred song and silence in the Great Hall.

We will learn these beautiful and melodious sung chants in the first half of the evening and after a tea break gather again for a reflective time of sung prayer and silence. The singing will be led by Wren Hughes, an old friend of the Abbey.

Please come ready to sing! No previous experience is necessary. There is no charge but a donation of £10-£15 towards the upkeep of The Abbey would be welcome. If you want to come please do register your interest on Eventbrite (link on our website).



## Saturday talks at The Abbey

Join us for the second session of our three-part workshop series, “If mindfulness is a doorway, what’s on the other side?”, on Saturday 14 March 2026, from 10am to 1pm in the Library.

Following the positive response to September’s workshop and the success of the first session in this series, we’re delighted to continue this journey with Peter Yiangou.

Peter Yiangou, a retired chartered architect, and now Chair of the Board and also a teacher at Oxford Mindfulness, will guide these workshops exploring what lies “on the other side” — and how this inquiry can deepen our understanding of happiness, awareness, and personal growth.

You will find more details on our website and social media pages.

## 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. Gardening experience is not necessary. Come and spend time in this special garden and enjoy working with other volunteers and make new friends.

The Abbey Workshop

We have a small but keen band of volunteers who, on top of pursuing their own interests in various woodcraft activities are now also contributing their many and varied skills to help us maintain the Abbey. New members are always welcome, so please contact us at: [abbeyworkshop@theabbey.uk.com](mailto:abbeyworkshop@theabbey.uk.com) if you’re interested and would like to know more.

## 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 music.

We are open every Saturday from 10 am to 2pm. Occasionally the café won’t be held in the Great Hall if we are hosting a retreat or another event so check our website and social media for any updates.

## Meditation at the Abbey

The Abbey offers an opportunity to experience 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 method which guides participants to focus on a deeper source within our hearts and to experience harmony within. It is offered to anyone interested, for free.

The meetings take place on Wednesdays at 7pm for 30-45 minutes in the Abbey. All are welcome regardless of experience. (find more information at [www.heartfulness.org.uk](http://www.heartfulness.org.uk))

## Keith Critchlow Legacy

The Abbey is pleased to be connected with the Critchlow family. Keith Critchlow was a British artist, lecturer, author, sacred geometer, professor of architecture, and a co-founder of the Temenos Academy in the UK. You are invited to come to The Abbey, Sutton Courtenay, on the 21st and 22nd of March 2026, to learn more about his life and work, through events hosted by his family members.

Two sacred geometry workshops and a projection of Keith’s work will take place over the weekend.

More info here: [www.keithcritchlowcollection.org](http://www.keithcritchlowcollection.org)

Please contact us at: [welcome@theabbey.uk.com](mailto: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 [@theabbey Sutton Courtenay](https://www.instagram.com/theabbey Sutton Courtenay)

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



The  
**DAMASCUS**  
Parish  
Drayton | Appleford | Milton  
Sutton Courtenay | Steventon

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...

Dear Friends,

Whatever our childhood was like, it was formational. We learned from our earthly parents, good things ideally, although not everyone's childhood is great. In the Bible, St Paul refers to the importance of up-bringing and of spiritual heritage. When he greets Timothy in his second letter to him, he calls him his 'Dear Son', praises his 'genuine faith' and then goes on: 'You share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you.' Timothy's childhood had been rooted in the Old Testament scriptures that he had been taught by his mother and grandmother. Their example had set him on the right path, until he was old enough to choose for himself to follow Jesus. Physically, when we are young, we need nurturing by mothers and fathers. Spiritually it is the same. When we come to faith, we need spiritual mothers and fathers to help us grow into maturity as God's adopted children. We also need spiritual sustenance: regularly reading the Bible, spending time in God's presence in prayer, and worshipping with the family of the Church. God – our heavenly parent provides our personal nurturing through prayer and the Bible, but He also gives us each other, to encourage and share our experiences of his faithfulness. However imperfect our earthly upbringing was, *God is a good, good Father*, a perfect parent who will only teach us *good* things. And gradually, as the fruit of the Holy Spirit ripens in us, we will become more like Jesus. We will gain more of the family likeness! Is there someone in your life who has helped you to grow spiritually? This Mothering Sunday (Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March), take time to thank God for them. Is there someone in your life whom you have 'mothered' or 'fathered' along the way? This Mothering Sunday, take time to pray for them.

And look out for details of all our Mothering Sunday services across the DAMASCUS Parish – you are very welcome!

With love and prayers,

Helen

*The Reverend Helen Kendrick, Rector of the DAMASCUS Parish*

## 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

## CHURCH DIARY FOR MARCH

**EVERY TUESDAY** – Feel like you have no time to pray? Why not join our online prayer Group for 30 minutes every Tuesday – see advert for details.

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup>** - 19:30 Lent Course, River Room – all welcome to join us as we 'Discover Jesus through the Eucharist'

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup>** – 9:30-11:30 Community Brunch in the River Room - **WARM SPACE**. This is a FREE Brunch open to all (although donations are welcome). Why not make it your New Year's resolution to come along, enjoy a breakfast and meet people from across the community!  
19:00 Friends of All Saints' Church Quiz Night in the Village Hall

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup>** - 19:30 Lent Course, River Room – all welcome to join us as we 'Discover Jesus through the Eucharist'

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup>** – 10.30-12noon Community Café – come for coffee/tea and cake and enjoy a **WARM SPACE**.

19:30 Together in Stitches in the River Room – an evening of chat and craft - come along with your own knitting / sewing / craft and enjoy free refreshments and company - **WARM SPACE**

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup>** – 14:30-16:00 Knit and Natter in the River Room - an afternoon of chat and craft - come along with your own knitting / sewing / craft and enjoy free refreshments and company – **WARM SPACE**.  
19:30 Sutton Courtenay Local Church Committee Meeting

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup>** – 19:30 Lent Course, River Room – all welcome to join us as we 'Discover Jesus through the Eucharist'

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup>** – 19:30 Lent Course, River Room – all welcome to join us as we 'Discover Jesus through the Eucharist'

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup>** – 10.30-12noon Community Café – **WARM SPACE**

**Friday 27<sup>th</sup>** 9:30 Sutton Courtenay Primary School Easter Service

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup>** – Marriage Preparation Course for all couples getting married in the DAMASCUS Parish in 2026

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup>** – PALM SUNDAY – Meet at **10.30am** at Tullis Close to process with the donkey to All Saints' Church for 11:00 service.

## MOTHERING SUNDAY



Everyone is warmly invited to attend the Mothering Sunday Service in All Saints' Church, Sutton Courtenay on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March which starts at 11am; includes the giving of posies and is followed by bubbly and cake to celebrate God's mothering love for us all.

## EASTER LILIES ALL SAINTS' CHURCH



At Easter we provide an opportunity to remember loved ones with a display of lilies in church. If you would like to make a donation towards the cost of this year's lilies in memory of someone, please put your donation in an envelope with the name(s) of those to be remembered and deliver to Ann White at 24 Frilsham Street before Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April. A list of those remembered will be on display in Church.

## Vicar's Fun Day 2026

With thanks to the Parish Council for their permission, we are planning to hold another Vicar's Fun Day on the Village Green on **Bank Holiday Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2026**.

**Thank you to all those who have volunteered so far to help at the Vicar's Fun Day.**  
**We still need MORE volunteers if you can help with ideas and practical, hands-on, help.**

**PLEASE COME TO A PLANNING MEETING ON THURSDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH AT 19:30 IN THE RIVER ROOM, ALL SAINTS' CHURCH.**

Please contact Helen at [rector@damascusparish.org.uk](mailto:rector@damascusparish.org.uk) or phone the parish office on 01235 847179.

## KNIT AND NATTER



### Afternoons of chat and craft

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

**Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month 2:00 – 4:00pm**

**The River Room, All Saints' Church, The Green, Sutton Courtenay, Abingdon, OX14 4AE**

Tel: 01235 847179 for more information

## WARM SPACES in Sutton Courtenay

We are continuing to offer a WARM WELCOME SPACE in the River Room at various times and dates this winter. Where these are indicated on the individual adverts this means that the event is free and open to all.

We offer free WiFi and kitchen facilities from which simple free refreshments are served.

If you would like to make use of a warm space just turn up or contact either: [rector@damascusparish.org.uk](mailto:rector@damascusparish.org.uk) or ring the Parish Office on 01235 847179 for more information.

## 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](mailto:DAMASCUSonlineprayer@gmail.com)



"they raised their voices together in prayer to God... After they prayed....." things began to happen!

Acts 4:24,31



## YOUR BELL TOWER NEEDS YOU!

8 bells in the church tower

5 regular ringers

3 poor, neglected bells

1 has your name on it...

Come along to practise on Tuesdays 6:30-7:30pm.

Beginners are welcome: tuition is available.

Isn't this something you've always fancied trying?

For further information contact John Napper on 848292

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

### Community Café in the River Room



Run by the church for the whole community

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March

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?

This is part of the **WARM SPACE** initiative - Open to all – a good place to meet with friends or make new ones. If you need transport to and from the church please 'phone the Parish Office on 01235 847179

### First Aid course for the over 60's

Paul Tiney of Foremost First Aid Training is running a First Aid course for the over 60's in The River Room, All Saints Church, Sutton Courtenay on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 10.30 to 12.30. Cost £10. Numbers are limited.

Would you know what to do in a medical emergency at home or in the community? Come and join us for an informative morning looking at some key first aid emergencies where you could make real a difference. Held in a relaxed setting, we will explore some simple steps to take which could save the life of a relative, friend or neighbour.

- Heart attack
- Stroke
- The unresponsive casualty (recovery position)
- Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation
- The safe use of an AED (defibrillator)
- Falls
- Choking
- Open question time for any concerns about first aid

If you would like to take part, please contact Alison Budd

Email: [alison@pbudd.me](mailto:alison@pbudd.me)

or ring the Parish Office 01235 847179

### MOVIE MATINEES

The next Movie Matinee in the River Room (A **WARM SPACE**) is on

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2026 – 4pm**

For a full programme to be sent to you please email:

[admin@damascusparish.org.uk](mailto:admin@damascusparish.org.uk)

or pick one up from the back of the church

Entry is **free** and refreshments are available.



### COMMUNITY BRUNCH

is happening

9:30-11:30

in the River Room, All Saints' Church

**Saturday 7th March**

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)

### Together in Stitches

Do you wish you could find time for craft projects?

Would you like a fun evening, meeting like-minded 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!**



### WeCare2



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**



FRIENDS OF ALL SAINTS CHURCH ANNUAL  
 QUIZ EVENING SATURDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> MARCH AT 7.30PM  
 IN SUTTON COURTENAY VILLAGE HALL

We invite you to take part in our annual Quiz evening

Table of 8 £12 per person to include supper

Prizes for Winners & Runners Up

Please contact:

Sue Jenkins 07885 437454 or  
 SJJenkins33@aol.com to book a table

In its 10th year, SCIDS proudly presents...

**Charlie**

FRIDAY 13 MARCH 6.30pm  
 SATURDAY 14 MARCH 2.00pm & 6.30pm  
 Sutton Courtenay Village Hall

All tickets: £7  
 Box Office: 847707 (from 16 Feb)

SUTTON COURTENAY SINGERS

ADYP

Sutton Courtenay Singers\*

Music Director: Sebastian Thomson

Mozart: Requiem  
 & Vesperae solennes  
 de confessore

All Saints' Church 7:00pm Sunday  
 Sutton Courtenay 29th March 2026

Tickets £15  
 From: chairman@suttoncourtenaysingers.org  
 The Bookstore, Bury Street, Abingdon  
 Hari & Esha's, Sutton Courtenay  
 or suttoncourtenaysingers.org

\*formerly All Saints' Singers



The Abingdon DAMASCUS Youth Project



Meet the ADYP Young Ambassadors

Erin Laila

"I wanted to volunteer because when I leave school I want to work with children. I've been supported by ADYP for over six years, and I wanted to give something back. I've realised there's so much more to youth clubs than just Uno and dodgeball."



"I wanted to apply for ADYP because I want to be a youth worker when I'm older, and it will help me gain experience. Since starting, I've realised it really pushes your communication skills and confidence."

Every Wednesday, two local young leaders volunteer at the Steventon ADYP youth session, supporting younger attendees and helping the sessions run smoothly.

### BRIDGE AFTERNOONS

Come and play bridge on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

### SUTTON COURTENAY TUESDAY CLUB

We always welcome new members

We meet every third Tuesday monthly in the

River Room, All Saints Church, at 7.30 pm

Come along for a visit

TUESDAY 21<sup>st</sup> APRIL

Contact us via email at [kathyhead809@gmail.com](mailto:kathyhead809@gmail.com)

Or 07766076599



## The River Room

Looking for the perfect place for a group meeting, private party, art or exercise class, case conference or team away day?



The River Room is an attractive, light and modern room suitable for any get-together. There is an adjacent well-equipped kitchen, entrance foyer and two WCs (one of which is accessible).

It has capacity for 40 seated to 80 standing, and there is a projector, complete A/V system and digital piano.

### FOR HIRE

Enquiries: 01235 847179 or

[admin@damascusparish.org.uk](mailto:admin@damascusparish.org.uk)

All Saints' Church, Sutton Courtenay OX14 4AE

## WHITE HORSE RESERVOIR



### Introducing White Horse Reservoir

Thanks to everyone who took part in the recent statutory consultation on our proposed new reservoir. We're grateful to everyone who shared their views and attended our community information events. We're now carefully reviewing all the feedback received.

In January 2026, we were pleased to introduce the project's new name: White Horse Reservoir. Formerly known as the South-East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO), it remains the same project with the same vision, but with a new identity that reflects its role in securing future water supplies and delivering lasting benefits for people and nature. We've also published a tender notice to appoint a main works contractor to help design and build the reservoir. Construction is expected to create around 1,800 jobs, with roles during and after the build spanning careers such as ecologists, engineers, archaeologists, electricians, park rangers and sailing instructors.

To stay updated on our progress, please visit [thames-sro.co.uk/whitehorsereservoir](https://thames-sro.co.uk/whitehorsereservoir)



## Milton Minors Playgroup

Every Wednesday  
- including school holidays  
9:30 until 11:30 am

Come along and join us  
£4 per family, refreshments included

Milton Methodist Church Hall,  
Milton High Street OX14 4EJ



IN AID OF FLEXICARE

# NIGHT IN THE MUSEUM 2026

CLASSICAL MUSIC CONCERT

**THE IVEL FLUTE TRIO**  
WILL PERFORM A VARIETY OF PIECES, IN A LOVELY AND RARE COMBINATION OF FLUTE, PIANO AND CELLO

**SATURDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 7.30PM** **TICKETS £35\*** INCLUDING DRINKS & CANAPES

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, PARKS ROAD, OXFORD, OX1 3PW

TICKETS £35\*\* INCLUDING DRINKS & CANAPES  
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[WWW.FLEXICARE.ORG](http://WWW.FLEXICARE.ORG) | 01865 321891 | [ADMIN@FLEXICARE.ORG](mailto:ADMIN@FLEXICARE.ORG)

## Garden Opening for Flexicare

Larkbears, 85 Cumnor Hill, OX2 9HX

Sunday, March 29th, 2.00 - 6.00pm

Entrance free but donations to Flexicare appreciated

Teas & sale of homemade preserves and plants

Early Spring flowers in an Arts & Crafts garden including small fritillary meadow



## MILTON MANOR HOUSE

### MILTON MANOR HOUSE

A hidden historic gem!



Open to the Public 2026

4th to 6th April, 16th to 31st May,

16th to 31st August

2pm to 5pm

Milton, Oxfordshire OX14 4EN

A family home with a pleasant, relaxed and informal atmosphere, fascinating history and interesting grounds.

Tour of the house and access to the grounds:

Adult £10 Child £3

Grounds only: Adult £5 Child £1

N.B. Cash only

Tea room. Free parking.

Sorry - no dogs

See [www.miltonmanorhouse.com](http://www.miltonmanorhouse.com) for details

## RAINBOWS



'We play loads of fun games, do activities and challenges and sometimes get badges'

Matilda

### Rainbows

Sutton Courtenay Village Hall  
Term time Mondays 5-6:15pm

### Girls play, learn and have tons of fun

for ages 4 to 7

At Rainbows, we welcome all girls to play, learn and have fun in a creative, safe space for all abilities.



Registered charity number: 306016

Join a local Rainbows group [girlguiding.org.uk/joinus](http://girlguiding.org.uk/joinus)

## The Yamaha Music Education System at Matrix Arts Centre - the Junior Music Courses

At Matrix Arts Centre in Sutton Courtenay, we specialise in music education for young children and have become one of the most prominent Yamaha Music Schools in Europe. While we occasionally share our news, we're not sure we've ever really written in depth about the concept of the courses we offer.

The Yamaha Music Education System was founded in Japan in the 1950s as a non-profit initiative by Yamaha's then president, Genichi Kawakami. His vision was that music education should be accessible, systematic, and central to a flourishing society—not just for future professionals, but for everyone.

Our courses are designed to foster a deep love and understanding of music, matched carefully to each stage of a child's development. Yamaha's unique, structured approach builds complete musicianship, including harmony, composition, and improvisation, helping children develop strong musical memory and expressive performance skills.

The early courses focus on 'Music Sense Instruction', developing responsive ears. Our approach is like that of language acquisition, where children use their ear first to

become fluent speakers. It means they understand the sense of the words and the story before they connect the symbols to the meaning. When applied to music, the result is that children really understand what they are playing, resulting in a musical fluency that can be otherwise difficult to achieve. Responses may be heard in their playing, but also seen in their movement, expression and engagement.

As children grow, the curriculum evolves, with many starting as young as two and continuing through to around age fourteen. Individual piano lessons are introduced at the appropriate stage, supporting each child's personal musical development. Although the group curriculum is shared, performance and composition outcomes are wonderfully diverse, reflecting each child's individuality.

We've been here in The Nursery since the late '80s and have seen many cohorts of classes complete the Yamaha pathway, with some of our graduates becoming professional musicians, teachers and composers. It is especially rewarding when former students return with their own children, remembering Matrix Arts Centre as a special part of their childhood.

Do contact us if you would like more information - our next Yamaha open day is **Sunday 15 March**. [matrixartscentre.org.uk](http://matrixartscentre.org.uk) 01235 847264



*Lindsay, Antonia and Oliver with the pedagogical leads from Italy and Germany. They represented the UK at a Yamaha Key Teacher conference in Vienna in January, the main theme was creativity. It was a chance for us to catch up with the teachers from France, Germany, Poland, Italy, Spain and Sweden responsible for teacher training in their respective countries.*

*Below: A Junior Music Course Book 1 class in action*



**BUILDING REGS AND HOME EXTENSIONS (1)**

In my last article, I discussed Permitted Development and Planning. So you now have obtained either Planning Permission or a Certificate of Lawful Development confirming your proposal qualifies as Permitted Development, the next stage involves Building Regulations—which deal with safety, structure, and energy efficiency.

If you're personally managing the job, you are responsible for ensuring compliance with Building Regulations. If you employ a builder, responsibility typically falls to them, and you should confirm this arrangement at the outset. As the building owner, you may still be held accountable if work violates regulations, regardless of who carries it out. Failure to comply can have serious legal consequences.

If your work is categorised as "building work" under Regulation 3, compliance is mandatory. This includes projects such as erecting or extending buildings, installing or extending controlled services or fittings (washing facilities, hot water systems, drainage), inserting cavity wall insulation, underpinning foundations, and work affecting energy performance such as replacing windows or installing fuel-burning appliances. Building Regulations also applies to alterations that will temporarily or permanently affect structure, fire, or access requirements.

The work must meet regulatory standards and must not compromise the safety or function of existing structures or systems. For instance, window replacements must not reduce escape routes, block ventilation, or hinder combustion air supply for combustion appliances.

Regulations also apply when a building changes use—for example, turning a garage into a bedroom may trigger additional compliance requirements for insulation, ventilation, or fire protection.

A key part of the regulations is Part L, which addresses energy efficiency. This applies to any building or extension designed to maintain indoor climate control. However, exemptions include Listed Buildings or buildings in Conservation Areas where alterations would impact their historic character. Other exemptions include temporary structures (intended for use less than two years), workshops and agricultural buildings with low energy demand, and standalone non-residential buildings under 50m<sup>2</sup>, such as small garden rooms. Conservatories, porches, and open-sided carports under 30m<sup>2</sup> are also exempt in some cases—but must still comply with safety glazing rules under Part N.

Building Regulations Approval is essential not just for legal compliance but also for insurance purposes. Insurers typically require confirmation that your project meets these standards, and non-compliance may affect your cover. Once your project is complete, make sure you receive a Completion Certificate—this is your proof that the work complies and may be requested by insurers or solicitors.

Understanding your obligations is vital, as failure to comply can lead to enforcement action or expensive corrective work. Please get in touch if you would like further guidance.

Jan Liberadzki BA Arch (Hons), MSc

JLDA (see advert on page 34)

**THAMES VALLEY POLICE**

**53 more neighbourhood police officers despite Home Office underfunding**

Back in December, the Government announced the funding settlement for Thames Valley Police - allocating nearly £9m less than they had previously indicated! The funding from central government will barely cover the costs of inflation and pay increases for police officers. In addition the Home Secretary, Shabana Mahmood, confirmed at the end of January that the Government would only fund 40% of the cost of new police neighbourhood officers, putting more pressure on your local council tax bill and squeezing other parts of policing.

Despite these financial pressures, I am confident that we will be able to **deliver 53 more neighbourhood officers** this coming year, that's on top of the 218 extra officers delivered in the last three years.

This comes at the same time the Government has published a White Paper on Police Reform. It sets out radical changes including the regionalisation of policing into mega-forces that could see the abolition of Thames Valley Police. As well as plans for force mergers the document proposes the creation

of a new National Police Force and suggests changing the law to introduce more direct control by ministers for the first time, risking the end of operational independence.

Despite some good intent around better sharing of information between police forces to tackle serious and complex crime, overall I am deeply concerned by these plans which will do nothing to deliver better policing locally and are likely to see less money available for the police in our area. I will continue to challenge the Home Office on these plans and stand up for policing locally.

Greater efforts on crime prevention, alongside more police officers, are making a difference, with crime falling across Oxfordshire. Locally the priority will always remain cutting crime and catching criminals despite the pressures imposed by the Government.

**Matthew Barber**



## RSPB LOCAL GROUP



Hooray - we can start to hear spring in the birdsong morning and evening! In early spring the local RSPB Local Group (Vale of White Horse) heard enlightening talks on Corncrakes (Jan) & international comings and goings at Filey. Our onward programme is as below. Membership for the remainder of the 25-26 season is now reduced to £10 for adults (whether or not you are an RSPB member), and free for under-16s. This gets you the talks and walks below, and a quarterly e-Newsletter. If you prefer to attend individual 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.rspb-vwh.org.uk](http://www.rspb-vwh.org.uk).

- **Mon 16th Mar:** Bringing a Boom to Middleton Lakes (7.30pm River Room & Zoom)

Beautiful and tranquil, RSPB Middleton Lakes is a mosaic of wetlands, meadows and woodland in the heart of the River

Tame Valley. Katie Thorpe (Site Manager) will describe the many activities directed towards encouraging shy, elusive bitterns to breed on the reserve. Male bitterns boom (the loudest UK bird call) in spring to attract females and defend territories.

This date is also the deadline for our annual photo competition.

- **Sun 29th Mar:** College Lake walk
- **Mon 20th Apr:** Wildlife of the Chilterns (Jon Mason) (7.30pm River Room) (and photo competition results)
- **Sun 26th Apr:** Greenham Common walk
- **Mon 18th May:** AGM & Members' Evening (7.30pm River Room)
- **Sun 31st May:** Otmoor walk

## WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

The Sutton Courtenay News has been contacted by James Franks who has let us have access to some wonderful photographs of wildlife in and around Sutton Courtenay. James is keen to make people aware of the rich diversity of wildlife we have around our village.

Some of you may have seen James in the fields nearby as he patiently waits for a wild creature to present itself. He told me that it does help to be patient in the field and that he has more days capturing nothing than successful days. So, when the opportunity for a good shot comes he has to take it and hope he doesn't scare the subject off.

He tells me that he knows of 2 to 3 barn owls, a pair of tawny owls (that can be heard during the night), 2 to 3 badger setts and numerous foxes, roe deer and muntjac deer in Sutton Courtenay. The riverbank is home to various songbirds including warblers, and there are also otters and grass snakes. Last year was a great year for butterflies in the UK and the Common was alive with common blue butterflies during the summer.

The deer and its fawn on the front page were photographed between Milton and Steventon whilst the fox

below took a year of monitoring before he became curious enough to move closer to inspect James.

You can see more of his wonderful work on his Instagram page [jfranks\\_photoweb](https://www.instagram.com/jfranks_photoweb).

Thank you, James!





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Your home may be repossessed if you do not keep up with repayments on your mortgage. We charge a fee for mortgage advice; the actual amount will depend on your circumstances. Delta Mortgages Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, under firm reference number 921485. The Financial Conduct Authority does not regulate advice on Buy-to-Let Mortgages. Delta Mortgages Limited is registered in England, Company No. 12106965. Registered Address: Wilson House, 2 Lorne Park Road, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH1 1JN.



Karl Beacham

Mortgage Adviser

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You don't need a crisis  
to start therapy



Person Centered Counselling  
in Sutton Courtenay



Scan to learn more



SINGING LESSONS

Private music studio in Oxfordshire offering:

- 1 + 1 Singing Lessons
- Masterclasses
- Workshops
- Online Lessons

Oxford Voice Lab is run by professional Voice Coaches and West End performers Nadia Elde and Michael Storrs with a teaching method all about creating healthy, strong voices in a fun and supportive space. Whether you are a young, enthusiastic singer wanting to learn the basics of singing, a keen choir member wanting to focus more on technique and breathwork or a professional wanting to brush up on their skills we would love to hear from you.

- We provide:
- 1 Hour Singing Lessons
  - 30 Minute Singing Lessons (suitable for children aged 7-12)
  - Masterclasses on Vocal Technique
  - Masterclasses on Script Work
  - Bespoke Vocal Warm Ups (Tailored to your voice and ideal for every day practice)

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From initial enquiries to final handover,  
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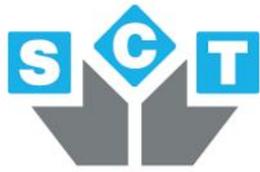
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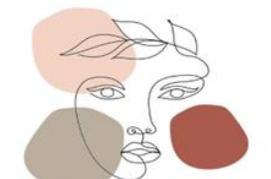
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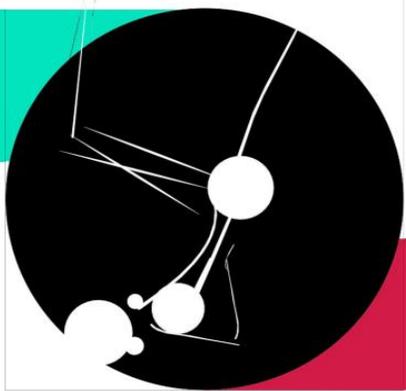
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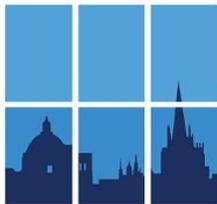
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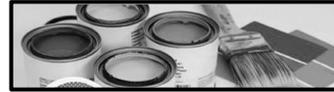
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