

SUTTON COURTENAY NEWS

VOLUME 55 No. 6

JULY/AUGUST 2026



Photograph provided by Sutton Courtenay School

VILLAGE DIARY FOR JULY

Every Wed	ADYP Drop-in	Village Hall	18:30
Thurs 2 & 16	WeCare2 (p. 10)	River Room	11:15-12:30
Fri 3	School Summer Fête (p. 5)	School Field	14:45-18:00
Sat 4	Community Brunch (p. 10)	River Room	9:30-11:30
Tue 7	Parish Council Meeting (p. 3)	Village Hall	19:15
Thurs 9 & 23	Community Café (p. 11)	River Room	10:30-12:00
Thurs 9 & 23	Together in Stitches (p. 15)	River Room	19:30-21:00
Sat 11, 18, 25	The Abbey Café (p. 7)	The Abbey	10:00-14:00
Sun 19	Hymns and Pimms (p. 10)	The Church	18:00

VILLAGE DIARY FOR AUGUST

Every Wed	ADYP Drop-in	Village Hall	18:30
Sat 1	Community Brunch (p. 10)	River Room	9:30-11:30
Sat 1 & 8	The Abbey Café (p. 7)	The Abbey	10:00-14:00
Sun 2, 9, 16, 23	Cream Teas (p. 11)	River Room	14:30-17:30
Thurs 6 & 20	WeCare2 (p. 10)	River Room	11:15-12:30
Thurs 13	Community Café (p. 11)	The Church	10:30-12:00
Thurs 13 & 27	Together in Stitches (p. 15)	River Room	19:30-21:00
Sat 22	Movie Matinée (p. 10)	River Room	16:00
Sun 30	Helen's Farewell Service and lunch (p. 9)	The Church	10:30

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

SEPTEMBER 2026 SCN DEADLINE – WEDNESDAY 19TH AUGUST 2026

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

VILLAGE CONTACTS

Parish Council:	Clerk, 07496 924 685 info@suttoncourtenay-pc.gov.uk
Stay & Play Toddler Group:	Facebook page: @SCstayandplay
Friends of All Saints'-Chair:	Sue Jenkins 07885 437454
Matrix Music School:	847264
The Abbey:	847401
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:	07875 649008
SC Local History Society:	John Talbot sclhs.org.uk enquiries@sclhs.org.uk
SCIDS (Drama Society):	Sally Dubock, 847707 sallydubock@gmail.com
Sutton Courtenay Singers:	Kathy Harrop-Griffiths, 848230 secretary@suttoncourtenaysingers.org www.suttoncourtenaysingers.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 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
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 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

Assistant 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
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 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 in Milton, **PLEASE NOTE: the Post Office has moved to 7b, Signal Yard, Park Square, Milton Park OX14 4RR.** Temporary opening times are; Mon-Tue 9:00-17:30, Wed-Thu 8:30-17:30 & Fri 8:30-16:00. It is closed on Saturday & Sunday. Final collection times are; Mon-Thu 16:45 & Fri 15:30. Further afield there are Post Offices in Didcot (TG Jones, 188 The Broadway OX11 8RN) & in Abingdon (5-13 West St. Helen Street OX14 5BL).

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.





Anti-social behaviour from motorbike riders

Parish Councillors are aware that dirt and motor bike riders frequently causing a disturbance to residents. There are a couple of groups who use the network of public rights of way, Kelaart's Field, and the recreation ground. If you notice motorbikes in these areas, please report the issue at the time to Thames Valley Police via their website www.thamesvalley.police.uk or by phoning 101. Reporting helps the police build up a pattern so that they can target resources to when there is a high possibility of encountering the riders to stop them.

Planning

This continues to form a significant workload for the parish council's planning working party. We are pleased to report some progress in our request to County Council to review the way minerals and waste planning applications (FCC and Heidelberg in our case) are processed so that delays are kept to a minimum and the closure dates for operations and restoration are not continuously extended.

We have made representations to the OCC's Scrutiny Committee, which in turn has sent a list of recommendations to the OCC cabinet including commissioning an independent review of the OCC Planning Department. We have also made our presentation to the cabinet and now wait to see the outcome of these steps.

The working party is also carefully examining submissions to discharge of planning conditions for the Hobbyhorse Lane North and responding constructively to ensure the best possible outcome for residents most impacted as well as future residents of the development once built. The development will be phased and current estimates are that it will take up to 5 years for completion of the site. Anyone wishing to be alerted to submissions for this development or indeed any other development in the village can sign up to the Vale's planning news alerts

www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/planning-and-development/comment-on-planning-applications/sign-up-to-receive-planning-news-alerts/

Along with Appleford, we are continuing efforts through dialogue with OCC to see if alternatives can be found to minimise the closure period of the section of B4016 between Sutton Courtenay and Appleford during the construction of HIF1.

Councillor Vacancy

Sutton Courtenay Parish Council can have a maximum of 11 Councillors. At present there is one vacancy and the Council is looking to fill the position 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 7th July, 1st September, and 6th October 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 A full list of meeting dates is published 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), Christopher Campbell, 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 07496 924 685. Alternatively, you can contact Councillors directly, their email addresses are on the website.



BRIDGE AFTERNOONS

Come and play bridge in the River Room from 2-5pm with a cup of tea & a piece of cake - £5

Next sessions: Fri 4th & 18th September 2026

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.

N.B. No Bridge Afternoons in July and August



We are now two weeks into the final half term, with five weeks to go until the summer break. This is always a significant time of year—where learning, confidence and experience come together, and where we see children step forward with increasing independence and pride. Careful transitions and thoughtful preparation remain key, ensuring every child feels ready for what lies ahead.

One of the most powerful moments this month was welcoming the NSPCC into school. The workshops were comprehensive, age-appropriate and delivered with real care, covering safeguarding themes from neglect to emotional wellbeing and personal safety. What stood out most was our children—their knowledge, maturity and openness. They spoke with confidence, asked perceptive questions and demonstrated a clear understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. Equally important was the safe space these sessions created—allowing children to speak, reflect and know they are supported.

Year 6 also benefited from a fantastic visit from IMPS (Injury Minimisation Programme for Schools), taking part in an engaging and practical session focused on first aid and staying physically safe. They explored how to prevent injuries, respond in an emergency and act with calm responsibility. We were incredibly proud of their maturity and thoughtful contributions.

There is a growing sense of excitement across the school as we look ahead. Our upcoming visit to Winchester Science Museum for Years 4, 5 and 6 is highly anticipated, offering a valuable opportunity to experience learning beyond the classroom.

In school, preparations for our end-of-year production, *Shakespeare Rocks*, are well underway. Hearing Year 5 singing together with such energy is powerful, while Year 6 continue to impress with their humour and stage presence. These moments matter deeply - helping children manage nerves, work collaboratively and persevere towards a shared goal.

Year 4 continue to make strong progress in swimming, developing confidence alongside essential life skills. At the same time, excitement is building around our Young Enterprise project, with children preparing to sell their products at the **Summer Fayre on 3rd July** (see Page 5 for advert). Our Summer Fayre is a highlight of the year, and we warmly invite all members of our community to join us. It is a celebration of our children's creativity and collaboration, and of the wider community that supports them so strongly. Our fantastic FOSCS play a vital role throughout the year—championing sustainability and helping us resource opportunities we would not otherwise be able to offer. It is a chance to come together and celebrate a community where compassion, inclusivity and ambition run seamlessly through school life and beyond.

Looking ahead to September, we are planning a purposeful start. Safeguarding will remain central, with workshops led by our local police officers, alongside a two-week focus on ethos and culture to establish strong foundations for the year. Year 6 will visit Blenheim Palace, enriching their understanding of history, art and culture.

These final weeks matter. We celebrate academic success across all stages while preparing to mark the achievements of our fantastic Year 6 as they move on. We are committed to ensuring they leave us confident, ready and ambitious for the future. Alongside this, the joy of end-of-year traditions—from the much-anticipated water fight to shared celebrations—reminds us what makes this time so special. It reflects what we believe Sutton Courtenay CofE Primary to be: one of the very best places to learn and to work, where children thrive and community sits firmly at the heart of all we do.

We regularly share updates, photos and celebrations on our school Facebook page. Follow us here: www.facebook.com/suttoncourtenayprimary

Raluca Chende

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





As summer approaches, I have been busy pushing the central Government for further support for businesses and continuing local visits across the constituency.

I was pleased to host Alistair Carmichael MP, who chairs the cross-party Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Select Committee, and Charlie Maynard MP, Member of Parliament for Witney, on a tour of Ed and David Clayton's farm in West Hendred. We spent the afternoon with farmers and representatives from both the National Farmers' Union and the Country Land and Business Association, listening to concerns about rising fuel and fertiliser costs and sustainable farming. Despite global instability, the Government does not yet have a long-term strategy to support farming, make supply chains fairer, and ultimately ensure people in the UK have access to enough affordable food. We will continue to push the Government to recognise the importance of investing in British food production and to support those who provide the food we consume.

In addition, I questioned the Secretary of State for Business and Trade on what support is available for local high streets, such as Broadway in Didcot, which are struggling amid overwhelming operating costs. The Minister claimed that delivering a 'fast-growing economy' is the solution, but many small and independent businesses have yet to benefit from this. I also led a backbench Westminster Hall debate on government support for high streets and raised a wide range of concerns on behalf of local businesses and town councils. You can find the debate on <https://hansard.parliament.uk> searching for Glover on 4 Jun 2026.

It was a pleasure to visit Stanford in the Vale Pre-school, where I met with staff and children and discussed SEND support, transport services, and other local challenges. I also participated in the Kingsgrove ground-breaking ceremony, marking the start of construction on the community hub, which will become a valuable venue for the new estate. I visited Clifton Hampden Primary School after they contacted me about long-standing repairs needed to their roof, which have prevented children from using one of the classrooms. I will continue to facilitate discussions between Oxfordshire County Council and the school to ensure

repairs are completed promptly and effectively. Finally, senior staff at Harwell Campus gave me a tour of their new CO:LABS facility, which will provide local jobs in innovative scientific research.

At Prime Minister's Questions, I expressed both my own frustration and that of many constituents regarding widespread dissatisfaction with the political system. In his response, Keir Starmer said he has full confidence in First Past the Post to provide stable government, but cross-party momentum is building in favour of a more proportional voting system, where the number of votes a party receives more closely reflects the number of seats it holds. I will continue to make the case for a fairer voting system for elections to Westminster and local councils when the Representation of the People Bill returns to the House of Commons.

Other matters I will be working on in the coming weeks include debating improvements to the Railways Bill, visiting more local schools and businesses, and responding to individuals across the constituency in need of help and support.

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 or by leaving a voice message on 0207 219 7657.

Olly Glover, MP for Didcot and Wantage

The poster is for a 'SUMMER FETE' organized by Friends of Sutton Courtenay (FOSCS). It features a sun icon, a location pin for Sutton Courtenay, and a list of activities: Bouncy castle, Games & stalls, Tombola, Food & treats, and '...and lots more!'. The event details are: Friday 3rd July, 2:45pm - 6:00pm, On the school field, £2 per child. The background is light blue with a green hill at the bottom.

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

DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

It is great to feel that summer has arrived properly after a weird cold climate change snap, although I hope this being El Nino year will not bring too much hardship locally (and globally). Be prepared for extreme heat and keep cool – but do think twice before jumping in a river, lake or pond. My role has expanded from Water Champion to Climate Champion, so I intend to take a close interest in climate matters as well as water from now on.

There have been a string of tragedies already this year from people getting into trouble swimming – including locally in the Thames at Oxford. It is not just currents and underwater debris, but the quality and temperature of the water, which means it can be very dangerous to jump into a river, lake or pond. Further information and advice are available on the water safety section of Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue's YouTube channel or the Royal Life Saving Society UK's website.

Water Safety is now included in our Key Stage 1 (delivered by the fire crews) and Key Stage 2 Presentations to school children. All children in the Key stage 2 age group are offered a visit from our Oxfordshire fire and rescue service and they deliver a presentation that covers fire, water and road safety – this reaches over 6000 children annually.

A motion has just been approved to review the booking system introduced to improve the management of our **Waste Recycling Centres**. This is good news as it has attracted a lot of attention and it is not clear whether it is a good idea or not, so a review will clarify that and if it is bad news, I will support changing it for the better or even abolishing it. This review will include evaluating whether it has led to more fly-tipping or not. If you do see fly-tipping, you must report it to the district council so they can clear it up and seek to prosecute those responsible.

For our locality, work continues on **HIF1 and Steventon Lights** (on track for completion by November). I am pushing the council to improve the situation of Steventon Bridge, and this will be formally evaluated with a consultation later this year. Footfall is actually doing rather

well in Abingdon – much better than many towns – which is good news.

Local Devolution – we are expecting to hear mid-July on how the district and county council will merge into one unitary authority (with one person, rather than two, representing each area) – choices are either merging with Oxfordshire, or with West Berkshire and South Oxfordshire. Whichever, local accountability should improve, as well as cost efficiencies, but it will take 2-3 years to deliver.

Central government goes on to suggest we should form a Thames Valley wide '**Foundation Strategic Authority**', to enable the region to deliver on its huge economic potential (second only to London) – but is not clear how yet. In the meantime, the Science Vale goes from strength to strength, with Milton Park now 90% full, attracting state-of-the-art business growth in AI, data centres, solar and battery generation, biotech quantum computing and nuclear fusion – truly impressive! A new Tap Social 'Day Release' café with artisan coffee, sourdough, pastries, pizza and cafe will also open in the new Signal Yard quarter in Milton Park in July.

Work should start from the end of June on improving **Hobby Horse Lane** between Sutton Courtenay and Appleford – this is excellent news after 10 years of trying to work out a solution. Work aims to complete during the Summer and will give us a good new connection. Elsewhere, I am hoping to secure a new zebra crossing to enable safe passage of school children (and everyone else) at the Abingdon/Appleford junctions and calm the traffic there – there was another accident last week. This will dovetail with the work to provide safe crossing over the A415 Tollgate Road – particularly important for Europa School. Look out for a consultation on this later this summer and please support it if you see it.

Otherwise, enjoy the warm weather!

Peter Stevens
Councillor

SC (NATIONAL POWER) TRUST



TO HELP PEOPLE LIVING IN SUTTON COURTENAY & PROJECTS WHICH BENEFIT SUTTON COURTENAY

The Trust may make grants for charitable purposes including those experiencing financial difficulties; help where there is illness; advancing education and much more.

To find out more and enquire about making an application for a grant, please see the website <https://www.scnpt.org.uk/> or request a callback from the Clerk by emailing Clare at clerk.scnpt@gmail.com.

All enquiries will be treated in absolute confidence.

THE ABBEY, SUTTON COURTENAY

Saturday Talks at the Abbey

On Saturday 11 July 2026, The Abbey will host an introductory workshop on Centering Prayer, a contemplative form of Christian prayer rooted in the ancient Christian tradition. Led by Elizabeth Smith, the day will explore the method, spiritual background, and practice of Centering Prayer, with opportunities for participants to experience the prayer firsthand.

Elizabeth Smith has been practising Centering Prayer since 1988, when she attended a retreat led by Fr. Thomas Keating. After training in the United States under Keating's guidance, she became Co-ordinator for Centering Prayer in the UK, leading workshops and retreats nationwide. A former member of the Contemplative Faculty, she remained a close friend and mentee of Thomas Keating until his death in 2018.

The workshop runs from 10am–4pm in The Library. The cost is £25, including refreshments, with all proceeds supporting the Abbey charity. You need to book for this event on Eventbrite.

We're open to approaches too, so please contact us if you have an idea for a suitable talk or workshop. These events will be held in the Library on Saturdays.

Songhold at the Abbey

Join us on 16th July from 7pm-9pm for a special evening of music, reflection, and community with **Songhold** - a collection of simple, beautiful chants and songs in English that honour the Divine Feminine, especially the nurturing quality of *holding*. Through gentle repetition, each song becomes a mantra, inviting stillness, connection, and healing.

Song leader **Jackie Singer** is joined by **Melissa Holding** (piano, accordion, and koto) and **Josie Webber** (cello and bass), creating rich and uplifting musical arrangements. Whether you choose to sing along or simply relax and listen, this is an opportunity to rest in an atmosphere of warmth, peace, and love.

Come and be part of an evening that seeks to hold the world in love.

Holistic Structured Writing Retreat

Following the success of our first writing retreat, we're excited to announce a second edition from Monday 20th July to Wednesday 22nd July 2026. You don't need to be an academic or a professional writer to attend. This structured writing retreat is open to all and combines yoga sessions, nature walks and delicious vegetarian meals, all designed to provide you with an opportunity to write in a supportive, beautiful, peaceful and productive environment.

The retreat will be facilitated by Alison Eardley and Tina Cartwright. Alison is an academic, and is also a trained writing retreat facilitator, who has been running structured writing retreats for 9 years. Tina is a qualified yoga instructor and is also an academic. Her yoga practice is based on Hatha Yoga. Yoga sessions at the retreats will suit everyone from absolute beginners to regular practitioners. More info on our website.

Singing & Movement Retreat Day

A unique day of music, movement and connection is coming to Sutton Courtenay next summer. The Singing & Movement Retreat Day will take place on 2 August 2026, from 10am to 4pm.

The retreat offers participants the opportunity to learn and sing beautiful harmony songs by ear in a welcoming and supportive environment. Alongside the singing sessions, attendees will enjoy a flowing Dru Yoga dance workshop led by guest teacher Lottie May, designed to encourage relaxation, creativity and freedom of movement.

The event aims to bring people together through the shared joy of music and mindful movement, providing a refreshing day of learning, wellbeing and community. Lunch and refreshments are included in the ticket price of £95.

Places are limited and advance booking is essential. Further information and booking details can be found at: upliftchoir.com/retreats.

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 helping us maintain the Abbey. New members are always welcome, so please contact us at: abbeyworkshop@theabbey.uk.com if you're interested and would like to know more.

The Abbey Café

Cafe Opening Update – July & August

We're pleased to let everyone know that the café will be open as usual throughout July, with the exception of Saturday 4th July.

The café will be closed on 15, 22 and 29 August for a well-deserved break.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support.

Please contact us at: welcome@theabbey.uk.com or by phone: +44 (0)1235 242 283 with 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 Mon-Fri

**VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED**
At the Abbey

Got some time on your hands to give to a worthwhile cause? Then why not help us in our beautiful walled garden.

CONTACT US:
welcome@theabbey.uk.com



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

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ forgave you.” Ephesians 4:32 (NIV)

Returning from a short break in Wales, I stopped at a motorway service station and was reminded of an article that I had recently read by Tony Horsfall. In it he reflects on something called “God’s grace”, which is something often not described very well, but he illustrates wonderfully. Tony has stopped at a service station for a short break. He orders his usual coffee and teacake and sits down to read the sports pages in the newspaper. This may be something you have been doing recently if you’re following the Football World Cup? However, what happens next to Tony, I hope won’t happen to you.

He is so engrossed reading, that when he reaches out to pick up his coffee, guess what! Not looking properly, he spills his cup all over the table, down his trousers, shoes and on to the floor. He feels clumsy, foolish, and embarrassed.

In his distress he looks to the young person who served him for help...and they did not fail him. Without a word they came over with a cloth for him to dry himself off and at the same time gets down on their knees to wipe up the mess on the floor. The only words said were “You’re not the first and you won’t be the last!” Clearly, they had encountered human frailty before. Even more graciously a fresh cup of coffee was made, and for free - generosity this careless customer did not deserve, as Tony explains. This is how God is with us. He forgives our carelessness, our folly and shame. And not only that, He gives us a fresh start, a new cup of coffee if you like.

It is easy to act carelessly and without sufficient thought in our daily lives. A thoughtless word, an ill-considered action, and suddenly we are in a right mess. It is humbling and embarrassing to have to turn to another and say “Look what I’ve just done!” but healing and releasing to hear them say, “It’s alright, I understand. I’ve done that myself before now”.

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ forgave you.” Ephesians 4:32 (NIV)

The Reverend Rosie Bruce, Associate Minister in 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 JULY

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.

Saturday 4th – 9:30-12 noon Community Brunch in the River Room – FREE - all welcome.

Thursday 9th – 10.30-12noon Community Café in the River Room – come for coffee/tea and cake.

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.

Monday 13th – 19:30 DAMASCUS Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting at St Peter’s, Drayton

Friday 17th – 9.30 Sutton Courtenay CofE Primary School Leavers’ Service

Sunday 19th – 18:00 Hymns and Pimms (and snacks) on a Summer’s Evening – ENTRY FREE – donations welcome to the Sutton Courtenay Tower and Bells Appeal – you choose the hymns and we all sing them!

Thursday 23rd – 10.30-12noon Community Café in the River Room come for coffee/tea and cake.

CHURCH DIARY FOR AUGUST

Saturday 1st – 9:30-12 noon Community Brunch in the River Room – FREE - all welcome.

Sunday 2nd 14:30-17:30 Cream Teas in the River Room £5pp.

Saturday 8th 13.30 Wedding in Sutton Courtenay

Sunday 9th 14:30-17:30 Cream Teas in the River Room £5pp.

Thursday 13th 10.30-12noon Community Café in the River Room come for coffee/tea and cake.

Sunday 16th 14:30-17:30 Cream Teas in the River Room £5pp.

Saturday 22nd August – 16:00 Movie Matinee, River Room

Sunday 23rd 14:30-17:30 Cream Teas in the River Room £5pp

Sunday 30th – 10.30am Helen’s Farewell Service followed by lunch (see advert for details) all welcome!

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

Holy Baptism

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

Lyla Louise PEACH (14th June 2026)

Rest in Peace

We send our condolences and the assurance of our prayers to the family and friends of the following people who died recently:

Joan Ellen SKINNER who died on 6th May 2026. Obituary on page 15.

And the following whose ashes were interred in the churchyard:

James Richard CONSTABLE (28th May 2026)

Joyce Eileen RAYNER (13th June 2026)

FUN DAY THANKS

The Vicar's Fun Day took **£3132.33** on the hottest day in May. Considering the excessive heat this is an amazing amount which will go towards our Tower and Bells Appeal once all the expenses are deducted and other donations added in.

So, an ENORMOUS thank you to everyone who made what was my last Fun Day possible.

Firstly, to the parish council for giving us permission to use the Village Green and for giving us a grant to help cover some of the expenses. And then there was the team on the Green setting up the gazebos and putting out the tables and chairs; all the stallholders who worked so hard; Abbey Brass who played despite the heat (and gave me the amazing gift of the signed musical score from Howard Goodall -thank you); Jon the Sound and Power 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 especially to Lauren Beacham for organising such an amazing raffle with the most incredible prizes; the pubs for providing food on the day; The Swan for donating cakes to the cake stall and The George for giving a very generous donation; and not forgetting everyone who came and supported the event. It was wonderful to see so many people from across the village – despite the heat.

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

Anyone interested in helping with next year's please get in touch with the Parish Office – 01235 847179 or admin@damascusparish.org.uk



**You are Invited!
Helen's Farewell
Service**

**All Saints' Church
Sutton Courtenay
10:30am
Sunday 30th August
2026**

**Followed by a Bring-
and-Share Lunch
in the River Room**

Come and help us say thank you and goodbye to the Reverend Canon Helen Kendrick as she retires from fulltime parish ministry, after over 23 years in Sutton Courtenay with Appleford and the DAMASCUS Parish.

Everyone is welcome to attend both the celebratory service and the lunch, but to help with catering please RSVP by

31st July to:

Alison Budd

alison@pbudd.me or The DAMASCUS Parish Office, All Saints' Church, Sutton Courtenay, Abingdon, OX14 4AE.
01235 847179

If you would like to contribute to Helen's leaving gift then donations can be made on line:

Account Name: The DAMASCUS PCC

Sort Code: 40-52-40. Account Number: 00031419.

Reference: Helen

Or in cash/cheque (payable to The DAMASCUS PCC) via the Parish Office (address above) by **21st August.**

Thank you.

Update on the Tower & Bells Appeal



We raised £260 on 5th June when Jonathan Drake compered a special screening of his two-part documentary, 'Troy Story'. This was a fascinating account of the truth behind the myth which archaeology is revealing, and Jonathan's enthusiasm and extensive knowledge were infectious. We also enjoyed delicious Greek / Turkish style refreshments provided by Janet Knowles and Kathy Harrop-Griffiths. Thank you to all those who came. At the time of going to print we are still awaiting the faculty and are in the middle of the tender process. Further updates to follow...

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



Image by Freepik Image by pressfoto on freepik
 "they raised their voices together in prayer to God... After they prayed...." things began to happen!
 Acts 4:24,31



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](tel:07787521039)/morna28whitlock@gmail.com

Hymns and Pimms on a Summer's Evening



Join us for a delightful evening of favourite hymns and refreshing Pimms

Date: Sunday 19th July 2026



Time: 18:00

Venue: All Saints' Church, Sutton Courtenay



Entry is free, but donations welcome towards the Tower and Bells Appeal, helping to upgrade the interior of the church tower and to restore the bells for generations to come.

Bring your friends and family—everyone is welcome!

You will be invited to drop the number of your favourite hymn into a hat and to wait and see if it is picked and then sing along with gusto. Or you can just enjoy the music, soak up the summer atmosphere, and raise a glass for a good cause. More information from admin@damascusparish.org.uk



Summer Time
COMMUNITY BRUNCHES
 9:30-11:30

in the River Room, All Saints' Church
Saturday 4th July
& Saturday 1st 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

Please note there is **NO** Movie Matinee in July. The next one (Helen's last Movie Matinee) is in the River Room on

Saturday 22nd 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

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

This time there will be plenty of Favourite Cake!



Information Drop-in

Sutton Courtenay



Pop along and meet your local Link Worker for information and advice on a wide range of activities, services and organisations.

When: Thursday 9th July, 10.30am-12pm

Where: Alongside the Community Cafe, The River Room, All Saints Church, The Green, Sutton Courtenay, OX14 4AE

Rachel 07827 235460
community@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk
www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire

Community Links Oxfordshire is available to all adults living in the county, and is here to link you into what matters to you. Funded by Oxfordshire County Council.

Age UK Oxfordshire is an independent local charity. Registered charity No.1091529 and company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales No. 4328143. Registered office: 10 Napier Court, Barton Lane, Abingdon, OX14 3YT.

Community Café in the River Room



Run by the church for the whole community

Thursday 9th & 23rd July

13th 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



This year Ride and Stride is taking place on **Saturday 12th September**. If you would like to take part (either by getting sponsorship to cycle or walk around churches in Oxfordshire or by acting as a host at All Saints' Church) then please contact the Parish Office on 01235 847179 or admin@damascusparish.org.uk) The money you raise will be shared 50/50 with the church of your choice and the OHCT who use their share of the money to help local communities repair, maintain and improve Oxfordshire's historic churches, preserving them for future generations. All Saints' Church has benefitted from several grants from them over the years. Please take part if you can

MILTON MANOR HOUSE

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Open to the Public

16th to 31st August 2026

2pm to 5pm

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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 for details

CREAM TEAS in AUGUST



Sundays – 2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd August

2:30-5:30pm. £5 per person.

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

**IMPROVING YOUR HOME PT 1:
LOFT CONVERSIONS**

A loft conversion is one of the most effective ways to gain space and increase the value of your home. Whether you need an extra bedroom, a home office, or simply more flexibility, it can be an excellent investment—but it is also a major project that requires careful planning, good design, and the right expertise.

The first step is to assess whether your loft is suitable. Head height is key, ideally 2.3 metres from the top of the ceiling joists to the underside of the ridge beam. This allows for insulation, a new floor, and comfortable movement. The roof type matters too. Older homes with cut timber roofs are usually easier to convert, while modern trussed roofs often require substantial alteration. Staircase location is another critical issue, and must comply with Building Regulations, provide a safe escape route, and be wide enough to move furniture. The new space should feel like a natural continuation of the house, with good daylight. Rooflights are a simple solution, while dormers add space and layout flexibility.

Many lofts can be converted under Permitted Development, avoiding the need for Planning Permission, but this cannot be assumed. Homes in conservation areas, listed buildings, or those with large dormers or major roofline changes will usually require permission.

Structurally, loft conversions are demanding. Existing ceiling joists are designed to hold plasterboard, not people

and furniture, so new floor joists must be installed, usually supported by steel beams transferring loads to structural walls. Trussed roofs may need bespoke supports, and a structural engineer must design the alterations for Building Control approval.

Building Regulations also cover fire safety. The loft must have a safe escape route, normally through a protected stairwell leading to an exit. You'll need mains-wired, interlinked smoke alarms on every floor and, in most cases, new or upgraded fire doors. Proper insulation, sound separation, and ventilation are also essential—particularly in bathrooms to prevent condensation.

Choosing the right builder is critical. Loft conversions demand specific expertise beyond general building skills. Check past projects, references, and insurance, and use a clear written contract covering scope, costs, timescales, and what happens if things change. If your home is semi-detached or terraced, you may also need to serve a Party Wall notice to neighbours.

According to Nationwide (2023), a loft converted into a bedroom can add up to 20% to a home's value—often £35,000 to £60,000 in high-demand areas across southern and central England. With build costs of £25,000 to £45,000, the return on investment can be strong—typically 1.3 to 1.7 times the spend. Value is greatest when a third or fourth bedroom is created, and loft upgrades can also improve insulation and boost your EPC rating.

Jan Liberadzki BA Arch (Hons), MSc
JLDA (see advert on page 34)

THAMES VALLEY POLICE

Free tool marking as part of efforts to reduce vehicle crime

Last month, in collaboration with Thames Valley Police, I launched a new Vehicle Crime Strategy which aims to cut crime - particularly theft of, and theft from, vehicles.

Having your vehicle stolen, or something stolen from it, isn't a trivial crime – it can result in substantial financial loss, emotional stress and, depending on where the theft took place, security and community safety concerns. Whilst we have seen a reduction in vehicle crime across Thames Valley, with almost 2,000 fewer incidents of theft from, or theft of, a motor vehicle in 2025 compared with 2024, there is more to do. We launched the plan at the latest of a series of free tool marking events.

Tradespeople are significantly more likely to experience vehicle crime because their tools are seen as high-reward, low-risk targets for thieves. According to statistics from Wickes, 4 in 10 tradespeople have experienced tool theft across the UK. Tool marking is one of the simplest ways tradespeople can protect themselves from tool theft.

Since March, my office has distributed over 500 SelectaDNA tool marking kits to electricians, plumbers, carpenters and other traders across the Thames Valley, increasing the number of tools marked, making them less desirable to thieves and protecting more tradespeople's tools and livelihoods.

There is more information about future vehicle marking sessions and how to get hold of a kit directly if you can't attend one of the sessions on my website: thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk/vehiclecrime.



THE DUCK RACE



The Sutton Courtenay Duck Race held on Sunday 31st May on Ginge Brook

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

My 18-year-old daughter and I reported to Abingdon Police Station last Monday a horrific incident of threatening behaviour and harassment.

It occurred on Saturday 30th May at approximately 20:50hrs outside Sutton Courtenay on the cycle path beyond the village hall towards Didcot on a section of NCR5 (Hobbyhorse Lane to the Power station section).

My daughter was walking alone on the public footpath when she was deliberately chased by two men on black motorbikes that had been modified to be excessively loud. They shouted threateningly at her including "RUN little girl! RUN! We're going to get you!" while revving their engines in an intimidating manner. She was forced to hide in undergrowth - "We're going to find you!" they shouted. She then ran a significant distance towards Appleford to escape.

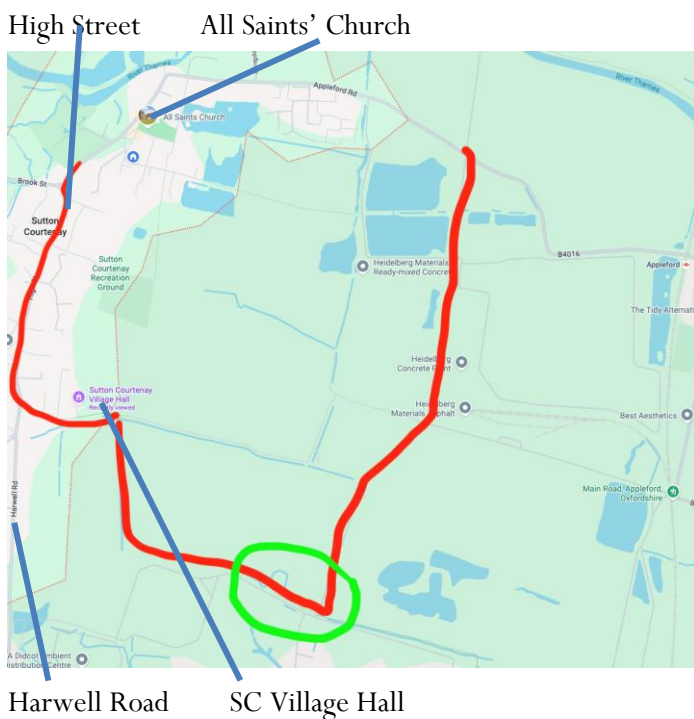
She was extremely frightened by the incident - convinced they would rape and/or kill her.

The bikers appear to use a section of the field adjacent to the old Didcot Power Station as a regular base. They have spray-painted blue graffiti on the tarmac path, including STOP signs and obscene imagery of penises. This is not only aggressive but constitutes criminal damage on a Public Right of Way that is frequented by young families, children and single women.

The Police are taking my daughter's experience very seriously and have filed their report under a new law: The Protection for Sex-Based Harassment in Public Act.

Below is a map that shows in red where my daughter walked and in green the area that is particularly dangerous.

Name supplied



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
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OBITUARY

Rest in Peace

Joan Ellen SKINNER who died on 6th May 2026 was born on 25th June 1937 in Cuckfield, Sussex, the eldest child of Charles and Nellie Rhodes and sister to Charles and Dennis. The family moved to Wallingford in 1943 where she attended Wallingford Girls School and passed the scholarship to go to Grammar School.

The family moved to Nottinghamshire for a year before returning to Oxfordshire and living in Harpsden, near Henley where she went to Henley Grammar School. Joan represented the school in all sports, including high jump, rounders, tennis, netball and hockey. On leaving school in 1954 she started work at Lloyds Bank in Henley. She continued playing hockey for Henley Hockey Club and was selected to play for Oxfordshire as well as the Lloyds Bank County Branches in the Annual Match against the City of London Branches.

Joan initially met her future husband, Derek, at Henley Rugby Club but got to know him better when, in 1959, she changed career to join the Civil Service as a Clerical Officer and worked alongside him at Huntercombe Borstal. They were married on 30th September 1961 and moved into the officers' quarters at Huntercombe. Their children, Julie, Janet and Michael, soon arrived and Joan quickly adapted to family life.

In 1967 the family moved to Gloucestershire where Joan joined the WI and taught at Sunday School. When Michael started school she became a part-time school secretary and

supervisory assistant at Stone School. They then moved to Feltham where Joan worked for Redifusion where she was eventually promoted to Area Office Manager.

In 1980 the family moved back to Wallingford. Joan then did a variety of jobs with an estate agents, a life assurance company and Lloyds Bank until she retired. She cared for her husband Derek until his death, and she was a very proud grandmother and great-grandmother. Three years ago she moved to Sutton Courtenay to be with her daughter, Janet, and enjoyed attending services at All Saints' and mornings at the Community Café. She and Janet also took part in the Christmas knitting challenges every year.

At the age of 84 Joan went on month long cruise to the Caribbean which she greatly enjoyed and was planning another trip when she became ill. She was cared for devotedly by Janet and her family who will miss her greatly.

This is an edited extract of the tribute given by the family at her funeral which was held on 8th June 2026 at South Oxfordshire Crematorium and conducted by The Reverend Canon Helen Kendrick.



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admin@flexicare.org or call Maureen Tossi on **07342 041388** for an informal chat. A full job description is available on our website at www.flexicare.org/work-with-us

This vacancy does not have a formal closing date; it will remain open until a suitable candidate is appointed.

www.flexicare.org
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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!**

Sutton Courtenay Produce Show 2026 entry form
5th September @ The Village Hall
20p per entry, children's classes are FREE

Tell us who you are:

Name:.....

Address:.....

What category are you entering?? Circle your entries

Fruit & Veg

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
15 16 17 18 19

Flowers, Flower arranging, Art & Photography

20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34
35 36 37

Craft

38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46

Children's class

47a 47b 48a 48b 49a 49b 50a 50b

Cookery

51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60

Those pesky rules!

The hall will be open to bring your entries between 09:45 and 11:00.

The doors will be locked after this for the judging to commence. Late entries cannot be accepted.

Where to drop off your form

Costcutters / Changes / Mrs Val Dalby, 6 High Street, Sutton Courtenay / Mrs Brenda Budd, 25 Milton Road, Sutton Courtenay / Mrs Lucy Dalby, 26 Skylark Fields, Sutton Courtenay OR email:

suttoncourtenayproduceshow@gmail.com

N.B. Categories for the Sutton Courtenay Produce Show can be found on Page 14 of the April edition of Sutton Courtenay News on suttoncourtenaynews.co.uk



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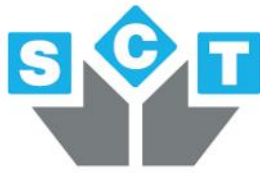
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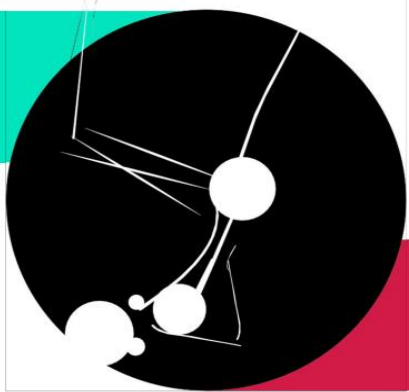
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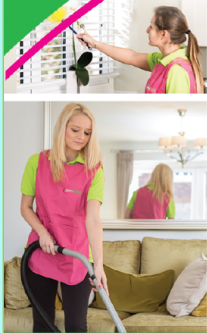


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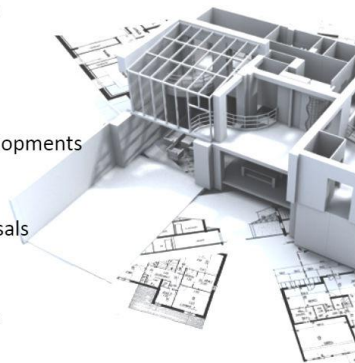


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