

SUTTON COURTENAY NEWS

VOLUME 55 No. 7

SEPTEMBER 2026



Sutton Courtenay
Craft & Produce Show 2026
The Village Hall
Saturday 5th September 13:30



VILLAGE DIARY FOR SEPTEMBER

Tue 1	Parish Council Meeting (p 4)	Village Hall	19:15
Thu 3 & 17	WeCare2 (p 10)	River Room	11:15-12:30
Fri 4 & 18	Bridge Afternoon (p 10)	River Room	14:00-17:00
Sat 5	Community Brunch (p 10)	River Room	9:30-11:30
Every Sat	The Abbey Café (p 3)	The Abbey	10:00-14:00
Thu 10 & 24	Community Café – Macmillan Coffee Morning on 24 th (p 10)	River Room	10:30-12:00
Thu 10	Together in Stitches (p 10)	River Room	19:30-21:00
Sat 12	Ride & Stride (p 9)		
Sat 26	Movie Matinée (p 10)	River Room	16:00
Sun 27	Harvest Festival (p 9)	River Room	14:00-16:00

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

OCTOBER 2026 SCN DEADLINE – WEDNESDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER 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: TBD

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: Post currently vacant
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. Opening times are; Mon-Fri 9:00-17:30. 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.



Saturday Talks at the Abbey

Join us on 12 September, from 4.30pm to 6.30pm in the Great Hall, for a special afternoon with acclaimed British travel writer Rory MacLean, who will share the story behind his latest book, *Geography of Heaven: Travels to the Hereafter*. Author of more than a dozen books, including the bestselling *Stalin's Nose* and *Under the Dragon*, Rory is known for combining travel, history and the human experience. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, his work has been translated into more than a dozen languages.

In *Geography of Heaven*, Rory takes readers on a deeply personal journey exploring meaning, connection, grief, hope and the enduring power of love. Blending travel writing, memoir and neuroscience, the book reflects on humanity's search for what may lie beyond death. Described by Robert Macfarlane as "extraordinary and intensely moving" and by Colin Thubron as "an epic of travel", the book has received widespread acclaim.

This promises to be a fascinating and thought-provoking afternoon for anyone interested in travel, spirituality, philosophy or simply exceptional storytelling. There will also be an opportunity to meet Rory and have a copy of *Geography of Heaven* signed.

More info on our website. You need to book for this event on Eventbrite - Places are limited.

Women's Wellness Retreat Evenings

We're so pleased to announce that these much-loved wellness sessions are returning to the Abbey, with a monthly series of nourishing evenings from 7-9pm.

Led by the lovely Ange from Lilac Yoga, with Theresa providing blissful sound experiences, these special evenings offer a gentle space to unwind, rest and recharge after a busy summer. Expect an evening of deep relaxation, mindful movement and soothing sounds in the peaceful surroundings of the Abbey.

Upcoming dates:

- Wednesday 16 September
- Monday 12 October
- Wednesday 25 November
- Wednesday 9 December

Come along, slow down and give yourself some well-deserved time to rest and restore.

Booking is essential. To book, please contact Ange at @ange.lilac.yoga@gmail.com or book directly through [BookingHawk.com](https://www.bookinghawk.com) (link on our website).

Holistic Structured Writing Retreat

Following the success of our first two writing retreats, we're excited to announce a third edition, taking place from Wednesday 11th to Friday 13th November 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.

Sutton Courtenay Sisters – Women's Circle

Helen brings a warm, caring and safe space to the Abbey for women from Sutton Courtenay and beyond through her monthly Women's Circles. A chance to pause, connect, reflect and simply be, in the peaceful surroundings of the Abbey Library.

You're warmly invited to join Helen for an evening of reflection, connection and gentle exploration.

Upcoming circle themes:

- 3 September - Release & Let Go
- 22 October - Descent & Rest
- 5 November - Quiet Growth
- 3 December - Making Space This Season

To book, please contact Helen directly:

helenmudie121@gmail.com

The Abbey Café

The Abbey Café reopens on 5 September, following a well-deserved August break for our team.

Bring your friends and enjoy a selection of delicious homemade cakes or a light brunch in our beautiful medieval Great Hall, accompanied by live music.

We're open every Saturday from 10am to 2pm.

Please note that the café may occasionally close due to scheduled retreats. We recommend checking our website regularly or following us on social media for any updates.

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

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



Odours and fires at Sutton Courtenay Landfill site

The Parish Council would like to thank everyone who complained to the Environment Agency (EA) about the pungent and nauseating smell that repeatedly descended on the village during one of the hottest Augusts on record. Then of course there was the landfill fire incident about the same time.

As well as the above, some of you may recall the obnoxious smells that occurred in June 2024 which was caused by accidental leachate pooling. Several other failures of controls have occurred over the years which have resulted in low-level incidents but nevertheless impacted the wellbeing of ours and Appleford's communities.

Chronic Odour and Leachate Issues arising from landfill and composting operations.

- Strong Smells: sewage, rotten egg, and sulphurous odours.
- Leachate Pooling: surface water and waste mixing into "ponded leachate" near operational cells.
- Gas Infrastructure: Historical faults in on-site gas mains exacerbate foul air emissions.
- Composting Impact: High summer temperatures combined with organic waste agitation at the compost site, and temperature inversion in the winter regularly trigger year-round spread of smells.

The Site is due for closure in 2030. However, applications to extend recycling and waste transfer operations at the site are being made. Currently no application for extension beyond 2030, of the landfill and composting operations has been made. In anticipation of applications for extensions, the Parish Council is meticulously compiling evidence as to why these facilities should not to be granted extensions and, should these problems persist, there may be a case for earlier closure. The original planning permission was for closure in 2012 and then extended to 2030.

However, to make the argument for closure requires diligent compilation of data which **includes gathering** evidence of the number of complaints made by residents – so please don't stop reporting smells. Through the years there have been numerous incidents of low-level smells and small fires but we tend to react more and report the ones where it gets to the point of making our lives intolerable, it is important to report all levels of smells.

The Parish Council will also push for answers to why these recent incidents happened and why lessons had not been learnt from previous incidents that could have prevented a reoccurrence of these incidents. If necessary, information will be solicited through Freedom of Information requests. The EA is the regulatory body for environmental pollution and Oxfordshire County Council is the planning authority for assessing and granting planning permission for the facilities and operations.

In parallel, the Parish Council, through its planning working party, has been robustly challenging applications to extend the materials recycling and waste transfer **operation** on site as it potentially creates a loophole to delay closure and restoration of the whole site and hence provide justification for continued landfill and composting.

Please continue to report smells. Go to gov.uk/report-smell to report online or you can ring the Environment Agency incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 which is a 24-hour service.

Improvements to the Hobbyhorse Lane Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT)

On behalf of Sutton Courtenay Parish Council, a huge thank you to everyone who worked together tirelessly to get the upgrade to Hobbyhorse Lane (BOAT) done. Simon Lazare deserves a huge accolade for the diligence with which he has pursued the refurbishment of the village's footpaths both in his time on the Parish Council and even after stepping down.

Simon's latest achievement is to drive through the resurfacing of Hobbyhorse Lane - by ensuring that FFC would clear out the ditches prior to commencing the surfacing work and to hold Thames Water to account for the damage caused by its contractors in 2018. The Oxfordshire County Council Countryside team was very supportive of the work as it had to be done to the team's specification.

All in all, the teamwork was extremely impressive, and the Parish Council is most grateful. The BOAT is once again a pleasure to use.

Grants for 2027-28

The Parish Council is pleased to be able to award grants to local organisations which benefit residents in the parish. The organisation must be a not-for-profit although it does not need to be a registered charity. The Council will consider grant applications for the 2027-28 financial year at a meeting in November. If you are a member of a local group which would benefit from a grant, please contact the Parish Clerk (details below). Applications will need to be submitted by 31st October 2026.

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 1st September, 6th October, and 3rd November 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.



STOP PRESS - the Parish Council has been given planning permission to install cricket nets at the Recreation Ground and the work should have started even as you read this news - more details in the October issue of the Village News. Thanks to everyone who has got us to this point.

Funded by UK Government

Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan

Oxford traffic filters

28 September 2026

7am - 7pm except buses, permit holders and TfL

Traffic enforcement cameras

The filter effect

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

For more information, search for Traffic Filters on the Oxfordshire County Council website

Let's do Coffee Morning

Do your bit for better cancer care

Come along and help us do whatever it takes to support people living with cancer.

Place: THE RIVER ROOM - ALL SAINTS

Date: THURSDAY 24TH SEPTEMBER

Time: 10-30am - 12 noon

Contact: Alison Budd

VIA DAMASCUS PARISH OFFICE

Scan me to donate

Simply scan this QR code with your phone to donate direct to your host's Coffee Morning.

It's easy, quick and secure. Thank you.

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

Macmillan Cancer Support, registered charity in England and Wales (261075), Scotland (SC339407) and the Isle of Man (504). Also operating in Northern Ireland. 75005_miles_Thank_You_Poster

Official Sponsor

MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

And **CHOCO WAFER**



As the Government undergoes many changes during the summer, I am grateful for the time I can spend in the constituency on my summer tour, talking to people as well as visiting many local organisations.

The summer tour is a wonderful opportunity for me to speak with constituents from across the constituency, listen to their local concerns and ongoing challenges, and better understand how I can represent their views in Parliament. So far, I have visited Sandford-on-Thames, East Hendred, Steventon, East Hanney and Childrey. If you were unable to attend a surgery, you can request an appointment at any time throughout the year by emailing olly.glover.mp@parliament.uk.

It has also been great to participate in summer events, including Letcombe Valley's Discovery Day and Didcot's Ed Fest. We are fortunate to have wonderful community cafés, including the Cornerstone Café in Grove and the Talking Shop Café in Sandford-on-Thames. Supported by volunteers, these are fantastic community spaces, and I enjoyed visiting them both.

I also met with SOFEA in Didcot to see its warehouse, where surplus food is distributed to community larders across Oxfordshire, and young people who have struggled at school or with social exclusion are assisted into the workplace. In addition, I met with the Orchard Centre management and Nexus to discuss reducing traffic congestion at Hitchcock Way and improving administration of car parking charges.

I also visited the King's Arms pub in Sandford-on-Thames, to understand their business challenges, and to discuss the new support available from South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils for pubs and rural businesses.

The proposed cuts to the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) risk job security and could hinder vital space and science research. I visited Diamond Light Source at Harwell Campus, where staff explained in greater detail the potential impact of these cuts on major collaborative projects and the possible loss of specialist research capabilities. Alongside my Liberal Democrat colleagues who represent constituencies with significant STFC-funded facilities, I have written to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, urging the Government to protect our vital science centres.

My team and I also welcomed three work experience students from local sixth forms for a week, giving them insight into the work of a constituency office and the role of an MP.

As always, if there is anything I can help with, please contact my team at olly.glover.mp@parliament.uk or leave a voicemail on 0207 219 7657.

Olly Glover

Member of Parliament for the Didcot and Wantage Constituency

SC (NATIONAL POWER) TRUST



Sutton Courtenay (National Power) Trust

REGISTERED CHARITY 1075049

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 & much more.

To find out more and enquire about making an application for a grant, please see the website 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.



Sutton Courtenay (National Power) Trust

REGISTERED CHARITY 1075049

Support for Potential Community Projects

In addition to helping individuals living in Sutton Courtenay, the Trust is looking to identify potential community projects which it may be able to support. The projects need to be delivered in the village for the benefit of the community of Sutton Courtenay. In particular, the Trust would like to identify projects which will promote cohesive village life.

The Trust has received some suggestions such as a book exchange scheme, arranging advice surgeries or a capital-spend project such as an indoor sports hall.

The Trust would like to hear from any responsible organisations/people who can take responsibility for and implement these or other projects for the benefit of Sutton Courtenay. Please email Clare at clerk.scnpt@gmail.com or contact us through the website www.scnpt.org.uk/

PLEASE NOTE: the Trust cannot make grants towards costs that have already been incurred.

DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

As I write, the scorching summer heat seems to be subsiding, albeit still with too little water for our needs. Central government law changes in July mean that the SESRO White Horse Reservoir no longer needs any further targeted consultation to address concerns over its over-sizing, ongoing cost burden for bill-payers, and impact on local flooding including from emergency discharges which could devastate local communities. Thames Water have also released customer research findings indicating approval for it. This may be the case, and we all know we need more climate resilience for water, including resilient regenerative agriculture, fixing leaks, recycling and wasting less, transferring from wetter areas, using more rainfall and grey water for areas which do not need expensive purified drinking water, and right-sized reservoirs. However, new reservoirs must be delivered in a safe and affordable way. I intend to continue to hold Thames Water and other stakeholders to account.

Otherwise, Thames Water have been great in helping to fix the Hobby Horse Lane across to Appleford, which is now restored and fully open. As well as thanking Phil Stride at Thames Water for finding the support and funding to repair the lane, I want to thank FCC for preparing the area, removing the flood silt, and re-working their water drainage plans to ensure surface water does not drain off their land to damage the lane in future, Oxfordshire County Council Public Rights of Way Access team for their expert support, and also to Simon Lazare for pushing us all until it got delivered.

I am delighted to help the hugely well-run parent-led Europa Bus Club get a new contract to deliver local school bus services in such a way that makes sense commercially and environmentally, combining routes to provide the best way to get kids to school without clogging up roads. This fits nicely with the improvements locally for those who can cycle and walk. Work should now be finished on fixing the collapsed footpath over the heavily used Sutton Courtenay bridge, which is part of a series of improvements, including making the crossing safe at the Tollgate Road traffic lights, and, fingers crossed (subject to public consultation), a new zebra crossing to make it safe to cross at the other end – Abingdon/Appleford Road T-junction.

For Drayton, the High Street speed sign entering the village has finally been repaired, and the work to make the speed limit 30mph along the windy and housed road between Sutton Courtenay and Drayton is now part of the speed review plan.

I have also been working with the Environment Agency to ensure they monitor and hold FCC to account to do what they can to contain the smells in this heat. Most of you will have seen the fire on the landfill, which the Chief Fire Officer confirmed as posing no risk to the public. I chair the liaison committee and will be discussing ongoing measures to make the site more resilient to future heatwaves.

Everyone should read the Joint Intelligence Committee report on Climate Change and watch the National Emergency Briefing film made to disseminate its findings. Although people do not like hearing that burning stuff warms up the planet, it is a very simple truth - rapidly burning through millions of years of fossil fuels super-heats our planet. I believe everyone's legacy should be to leave their place in a better place than they found it.

One last thing – the Botley Road bridge and route into Oxford is due to re-open 20th September. Following this, the Oxford Congestion Charge will be replaced by the Traffic Filters trial, starting 26th September. Local residents are still eligible for 25 free passes, which will pass across automatically for those who have already registered. After that, people will be fined for going through the same gates used for the congestion charge. The trial hopes to prove a lasting reduction in traffic congestion.

Best wishes

Peter Stevens, Councillor

PLEASE HELP - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Sutton Courtenay News needs volunteer distributors for a relatively small route (33 newsletters) around the Hawthorns area of Heritage Park.

If you are interested and want to know more, please contact Lynnette by text on 07966 490233 or email

editor@suttoncourtenaynews.co.uk

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@bopenworld.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 DAMASCUS Ministry Team

A Thought to Ponder.

Come to me, all you that are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11: 28-30)

Reverend Helen Kendrick wrote in her last letter from the DAMASCUS Ministry Team, about the need for taking a break, having a rest, and making time to relax; "Going on holiday gives us the opportunity to take time off, to let go of the burdens that we carry every day." Jesus took time to withdraw from the crowds that followed him and his disciples. He invited them, and invites us also, saying "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest".

This month's thought to ponder is the next sentence: "Take my yoke upon you."

Nowadays it is not very often we come across animals or people wearing a yoke. A yoke is a frame fitted around the neck and shoulders of a person or animals, to carry or pull heavy objects.

Jesus invites us to take his yoke; that he will share the load, share the burden we carry, share the baggage we carry.

Jesus invites us to bring to him all the burdens and all the baggage we carry and promises us that we will find release. When we accept his invitation, we will find his yoke to be marvellously light and easy.

There is an invitation to you to find out more about Jesus in a series of evening sessions starting in September, thanks to Reverends Ann and Peter Templeman. Look out for the poster, Exploring Faith, for more details.

Reverend Rosie Bruce, Associate Minister DAMASCUS Parish

Holy Baptism

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

Averlie Grace PARROTT (12th July 2026)

Harley Felix HARGREAVES (26th July 2026)

Louie Daniel NICHOLL (9th August 2026)

Monty George NICHOLL (9th August 2026)

Raffy Arthur NICHOLL (9th August 2026)

Holy Matrimony

We send our best wishes and congratulations to the following who were married in All Saints' Church recently:

Matthew Robert HUTTON & Kirsty Louise ELLAWAY
(8th August 2026)

Services at All Saints' during September and October

During the interregnum we will try and keep the service pattern at All Saints' the same as far as possible. See below for services in September and October.

Sunday 6th September – 11am Family Service

Sunday 13th Sept – **10:30am All Parish Service at St. Michael's Steventon NO SERVICE AT ALL SAINTS'**

Sunday 20th September – 11am Morning Worship

Sunday 27th September – 11am Holy Communion

Sunday 4th October – 11am Harvest Family Service followed by Harvest Lunch Donations to Abingdon Food Bank and Farm Africa

Sunday 11th October – **10:30am All Parish Service at St. Blaise Milton NO SERVICE AT ALL SAINTS'**

Sunday 18th October – 11am Morning Worship

Sunday 25th October – 11am Holy Communion

CHURCH DIARY FOR SEPTEMBER

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 12th – Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust Ride and Stride

Monday 14th 19:30 DAMASCUS Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting

Sunday 27th 14:00-16:00 DAMASCUS Parish Families Harvest Festival Afternoon in the River Room – come and join us for bread roll baking, games and cake!

CHURCH DIARY FOR OCTOBER

Sunday 4th 11:00 Harvest Festival Service followed by the Harvest Lunch

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

Update on the



We have had a busy summer. The Faculty has been approved, and we have applied for Building Control permission and the tenders have been submitted. We are busy applying for more grants and the fundraising continues. With increased costs and the government stopping the VAT reclaim scheme for churches we are now looking at a cost of nearly £300,000 to upgrade the interior of the church tower and to carry out essential repair and maintenance on the bells.

Please look out for the leaflet which will be coming through your door soon for more details on how to support us in maintaining this village's Grade 1 Listed Church.

EXPLORING FAITH WITH ALPHA



For everyone: the committed and the curious
Exploring questions such as Who is Jesus, and Why and How should I pray

Six fortnightly standalone sessions
Wednesdays 7.30-8.50pm

Starting on Wednesday 16th September

Led by Revs Ann and Peter Templeman
at 5 Newman Lane, Drayton OX14 4LP

All are welcome

Please email anntempleman@live.co.uk
or call **07877 659156** if you would like to
come along to one or more sessions

DAMASCUS Parish Families Harvest Festival Afternoon

For families of all ages and sizes
Come and join us to celebrate
Harvest with bread roll baking,
games and cake

Sunday 27th September – 2-4pm

All Saints' Sutton Courtenay

River Room, OX14 4AE



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

RIDE+STRIDE for Churches 2026

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!

BRIDGE AFTERNOONS

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

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.

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!



COMMUNITY BRUNCH

9:30-11:30

in the River Room, All Saints' Church

Saturday 5th September

Bacon and Sausage Butties with
Vegetarian and GF/Dairy Free options.

Croissants and pastries.

Fruit and Granola. Fruit Juice.

And plenty of coffee and tea.

FREE - ALL WELCOME!

(Donations welcome – surplus funds go
to the Abingdon Food Bank)

MOVIE MATINEES

The next Movie Matinee in the River Room
is on **Saturday 26th September 2026 – 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 refreshments are available.

Community Café in the River Room



Run by the church for the whole community

Thursday 10th & 24th September

from 10:30-12:00

the money donated at this café will go towards

Macmillan Cancer Care

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



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

A new retail & social destination bringing everyday convenience to everybody

Milton Park's Signal Yard, a brand new retail and social destination, is now open serving both people on the Park and the local community with a host of new independent retailers having opened their doors.

Signal Yard brings together everyday convenience in one easily accessible location along with climate-resistant planting to create a welcoming place for everyone to enjoy.

The much-loved Milton Post Office, providing access to postal and banking services along with Apollo Pharmacy, offering prescriptions, healthcare advice and a range of NHS and private pharmacy services, have relocated to brand-new, air-conditioned units in Signal Yard. The development is also home to Bros Barbers, Damira Dental Studios and Flex Health Hub, bringing health, wellbeing and personal care together in one place.

Alongside these essential services, Signal Yard features an exciting mix of independent food, drink and retail businesses. Visitors can enjoy handcrafted burgers from 1885 Burgers, as well as fresh plant-based breakfasts, brunches and lunches at Planted Plates.

Coming soon is Day Release by Tap Social which will be an all-day community café, bakery and bar. Importantly, Signal Yard has been designed with accessibility in mind, being easy to reach on foot, by bicycle, public transport or car. A new, dedicated Signal Yard car park with more than 100 spaces, including accessible parking, makes visiting simple and convenient.

As well as improving access to everyday amenities, Signal Yard is expected to deliver wider benefits for the local economy. New retail, hospitality and service businesses are creating local employment opportunities and supporting local suppliers.

Clare Fleet, Asset Manager of Milton Park at Federated Hermes Real Estate said: "We're incredibly proud to see Signal Yard already being embraced by the local community. From the very beginning, our ambition was to create somewhere that brings people together while championing independent businesses from Oxfordshire. Seeing that vision come to life, with such positive support from local residents and those who work at Milton Park, has been hugely rewarding and we're excited to see Signal Yard continue to grow as a welcoming destination for everyone."

To find out more about Signal Yard and keep up to date with the latest news visit www.miltonpark.co.uk/signal-yard/ and subscribe to the Milton Wonder newsletter for regular updates.



CRAFTERS WANTED FOR REMEMBRANCE PROJECT

Ready for Remembrance Sunday this year, we'd like to make a cascade of poppies to hang from the pulpit at All Saints. We're looking to collectively create about 250 fabric, knitted or crocheted poppies. These can be anywhere between 4 and 10 cm.



- *Do they need to be red?* – We'd like the vast majority to be red, but if you have a desire to make us a few poppies of a different colour to signify something in particular, please let us know.
- *Is there a set pattern?* – No – please use a pattern of your choosing as having a variety of designs is sure to enhance the effect. This said, if you would like us to find a pattern for you, then do get in contact.
- *When are the poppies needed by?* – Please bring your poppies to church/the church office from the beginning of September, with the deadline being the end of September. (This might seem early, but the team are aware that we'll also be wanting to plan for Christmas!)

Many thanks for supporting us with this project, from Alison Budd and Bryony Landsbert (who are both good people to ask if you have any questions).



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

Could you please highlight once again about the amount of dog poo still not being picked up by their owners on paths and grass areas around Sutton Courtenay, especially round Bradstocks Way and Barretts Way especially in the grounds opposite the flats. -Name supplied

What The Vale of the White Horse says about Dog Fouling:

Reporting the issue

If you see a dog owner allowing their dog to foul and not picking it up please note down as many details as you can that might help us to identify them. We require the following information to commence an investigation:

- date and time of incident
- location of incident
- description of person in charge of the dog
- description of the dog
- name and/or address of person in charge of the dog

We will need a written statement from you for our investigation that could lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued. The current fine is £50. If a person refuses to pay they can be taken to the local Magistrates Court for the dog fouling offence and fined up to £1,000.

For dog owners

To avoid getting a fine, here are some tips:

- never let your dog walk far from you as this makes it difficult to see when they foul
- always carry a bag when walking your dog so you can clean up. If you do not have a bag ask another dog walker if they have a spare
- encourage your dog to stay on the perimeters of fields or pitches to prevent any fouling causing harm
- NB – You will be breaking the law if your dog is not wearing a collar and ID tag and is not microchipped.

Report dog faeces on the pavement

You can report excessive amounts of dog faeces on the pavement by contacting our contractor, Biffa, on 01235 422123 or admin.vale@biffa.co.uk They will arrange for the faeces to be cleaned up. We are only responsible for clearing the public highway and other relevant land. Landowners are responsible for their own property. You can check if the location is classified as public highway by viewing the Oxfordshire County Council Highways Register.

Contact Envirocrime

01235 422146

envirocrime@southandvale.gov.uk

Alan Calver joined the Parachute Regiment at the age of 20, joining in London. He served for six years from 1957 and in that time made approximately 40 jumps before finishing his army contract. Part of his responsibilities at Abingdon airfield was to encourage young people to consider an army career with the Parachute Regiment.

Not long after he retired the Red Devils Parachute Team was formed to carry on the enlistment programme.

Sixty years later at the age of 86 he arranged to make one more jump with a dual instructor to raise money for children to be evacuated from the endangered areas of eastern Ukraine. He raised £4000 which via the Red Cross Ukraine Children charity enabled 95 children to be evacuated.

When the team was scheduled to perform at Battle Proms at Highclere Castle he expressed a wish to meet these young service members, most of them 60 years younger than Alan, but the same age as when he served almost 70 years ago.

There was an enthusiastic exchange of parachute regiment camaraderie between youth and age.



Your RSPB Local Group (Vale of White Horse) is all set for the new season, and we have a brand new website at group.rspb.org.uk/vwh which has all the details for the year ahead.

We are looking forward to welcoming you to our monthly indoor talks (at the River Room, by the church, Sutton Courtenay, and/or via Zoom in deepest winter) and outdoor wildlife walks.

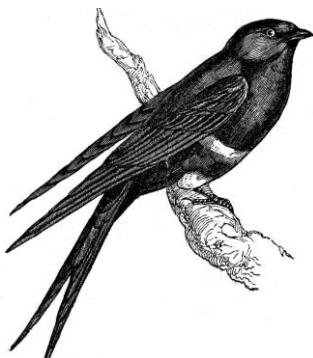
At our first session on Monday 21st September (7.30pm in the River Room) we will hear from Dr Pat Morris on "Hedgehogs". Pat is President of the British Hedgehog Preservation Society, and was previously a Senior Lecturer in Zoology at Royal Holloway, University of London. Pat's 'New Naturalist' volume on the hedgehog was published in 2018. and he has contributed to numerous BBC radio and TV programmes, including 'The Great Hedgehog Mystery' and 'The Incredible Edible Dormouse.'

Quick details of the next few talks & walks (these continue until May), more info on our website above:

- Talk 19th Oct: Oxfordshire bird sightings (Roger Wyatt)
- Walk 24th Oct: RSPB Otmoor
- Talk 16th Nov: Strictly Nature (Simon Booker)
- Walk 22nd Nov: Port Meadow
- Talk 21st Dec: (Zoom): Birds of Bhutan (Richard Baines)
- Visit 27th Dec: "Wonder of Birds" Exhibition at the Weston Library, Oxford

The cost for the 26/27 season is held at £15 for adults (whether or not you are an RSPB member), and free for under-16s. This covers our programme of monthly talks and wildlife walks, and an e-Newsletter. If you prefer to attend just one or two talks, you can do this as a non-member for £5 per talk. You can join using the form on our website (under About Us), or at a meeting (cash only). For meetings with an option to join via Zoom, members receive the link via email a few days beforehand.

See you there.



Why Early Prison Release Matters Beyond the Headlines

Last month we heard the news that under the new Sentencing Act the killers of PC Andrew Harper would be eligible for early release next year. Andrew was killed in the line of duty just seven years ago. Along with many others I was hopeful when the story prompted the new Prime Minister to review the policy, but the news this month is that his killers will still be released as planned early in 2027.

There are some welcome changes to the Sentencing Act that will see rapists and child sex offenders remain in prison for longer. This is good news considering just a few months ago the Government rejected moves to do exactly that.

I am the first to accept there is a real problem with prison capacity, frankly more prisons need to be built, along with other changes to our courts, sentencing and more. Nevertheless, the solution cannot be to let dangerous people back out on the streets.

The problem with the Sentencing Act goes far beyond the case of PC Andrew Harper, because it fails to look at the risk individual prisoners might pose, and instead is a blanket approach based on the type of offence. Where previous early release schemes have been risk based, this new law means that whether someone has a violent past or is a persistent domestic abuser, they will still be released. Rehabilitation matters, but it takes time and punishment and public protection remain important reasons for keeping people in prison.

The current plan will put huge strain on the Probation Service and the police, who will be dealing with more criminals out in the community. The National Police Chief's Council has forecast an overall increase in crime of 6% as a result of the changes. These aren't just statistics, that means more victims of crime.

Andrew Harper's killers have shown no remorse for their awful crime. The potential early release of these two individuals has highlighted the failings in the Sentencing Act. It is important that some of the worst problems created by the Government's plans are fixed as a result of this case, but it would be a huge disservice to Andrew and his family if, despite a change in the law, two of his killers were released early. This cannot be allowed to happen. I am working with colleagues in Parliament and with civil servants behind the scenes to try to get this position changed for when Parliament returns in September. The Thames Valley Police Federation have launched a petition at [Change.org/PCHarper](https://change.org/PCHarper).



Calling All Singers!

Sutton Courtenay Singers*
are looking for new voices



We are a friendly local choir with an excellent music director. We perform a range of choral works and give two concerts a year in All Saints' Church, Sutton Courtenay.

Rehearsals - Fridays 7:30-9:30 pm in Matrix Arts Centre.
No audition required - just come along and try us out!

Winter Concert on 6th December 2026
Haydn's Nelson Mass & Britten's A Ceremony of Carols

Email chairman@suttoncourtenaysingers.org
or visit www.suttoncourtenaysingers.org

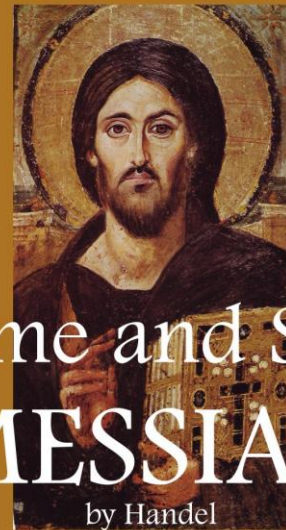
Rehearsals start 11th September 2026

Interested but not sure?
Open Rehearsal Session: Friday 18th September 2026

* previously All Saints' Singers

Sutton Courtenay
Singers

Sebastian Thomson
Conductor



Come and Sing MESSIAH

by Handel

Saturday 3rd October 2026

13:00 (registration from 12:15)

All Saints' Church, Sutton Courtenay OX14 4AE

Singers: £20 (£10 children/students)
includes score hire and refreshments

Performance at 17:00 free entrance

Booking: suttoncourtenaysingers.org



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

All Saints' Church, Sutton Courtenay OX14 4AE



IMPROVING YOUR HOME PT 2:
GARAGE CONVERSIONS

Converting a garage into a habitable space can be a cost-effective way to add value and functionality to a home. It can provide a bedroom, home office, gym, cinema (with added soundproofing), or simply a quiet retreat separate from the main house. For households with off-street parking or unused garages, it's a logical first step in improving usability. Integral garages are usually easier to convert since they share services and insulation, while detached garages may be more complex.

The first step is to check the structure. Many garages are built with a single skin of brickwork, an uninsulated floor slab, and no damp-proof course. Floors may be uneven or lower than the main house, so raising them can improve access and insulation. Older garages may need reinforcement, and all conversions must meet Building Regulations for light and ventilation.

In most cases, garage conversions fall under Permitted Development, provided the work is internal and doesn't enlarge the building. However, restrictions apply to listed buildings, homes in conservation areas, and properties where removing the garage would eliminate the only parking space. To be certain, it is advisable to apply for a Lawful Development Certificate confirming that PD rights apply.

Building Regulations approval is mandatory. Structural stability is crucial, and any changes to load-bearing walls will require a structural engineer's assessment and calculations. Floors, walls,

and roofs must meet minimum insulation standards, and heating must be extended or installed separately. If the garage is attached, fire-resistant doors and walls will be required, with safe escape routes. Kitchens and bathrooms need mechanical extract ventilation, plumbing must comply with water efficiency standards, and all electrical work must be carried out by a certified electrician.

Replacing the garage door is the most visible change. Typically, it is replaced with a window and infill to match the existing masonry, so the new elevation blends with the original house. Additional windows or rooflights can improve natural light. Since garages often provide storage, think about built-in solutions elsewhere. Privacy is important if the garage faces the street, and the design should match the style of the main house. Future-proofing with wiring for smart technology may also be worthwhile.

According to the RICS, garage conversions can deliver a return on investment of 10–20% for terraced and semi-detached homes, at an average cost of £10,000–£20,000. A basic conversion at £5,000–£12,000 typically adds 5–10% to property value, while a higher-quality conversion in a larger home costing £25,000–£45,000+ can add 15–20% or more (Savills), with the potential for rental income if regulations are met.

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

WORDSEARCH

The Topic is CATS!
(in memory of a sweet little boy)

L A P E R M M N Y D S Z G Z T
H A N N A V A S Q P I C D T P
X E R K R I K L E S A R Q O A
D L P A R G F X V K M X Q N J
G B F E P A L L A S E E Z K V
V S B L Q T W W C K S R L I W
X I A P W N L H Z E E H L N X
S N L N E L A G N E B S O E N
I M I Z D R B M N X T I D S A
F L E H T Q S H R A A N G E M
Y M A R P V O I R I D R A N Q
Z C E M D S G O A J B O R Q A
T U F Z O K K V F N P C G F Q
X L A B Y S S I N I A N G G A
A R O G N A H S I K R U T I K



- | | |
|-------------|----------------|
| Abyssinian | Ragdoll |
| Bengal | Sand |
| Birman | Savannah |
| Chartreux | Selkirk Rex |
| Cornish Rex | Siamese |
| Korat | Siberian |
| LaPerm | Somali |
| Manx | Sphinx |
| Pallas | Tonkinese |
| Persian | Turkish Angora |

Taken from www.puzzlemaker/discoveryeducation.com

SUDOKU

EASY

5		9		8				
				6		4		
					2	5		6
		8						
			7	3		8		1
2		1	6				4	
3	7			4	5	1		8
4		2	1	9				

MEDIUM

6					3		1	
8		1		5				4
	3			2		7		
			2			8		
		4				1		
								6
				1		3	7	
	5	9		8				
1							5	

Taken from www.puzzles.ca/sudoku (1099)

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Flexicare is an Oxfordshire based charity providing a home sitting service for families with severely disabled children. A sit typically involves a 2-4 hour period supporting a disabled child usually with their home setting or in the community.

If you are interested in applying for this post, please email a copy of your CV and a covering letter to: admin@flexicare.org. For an informal chat phone Maureen Tossi on 07342 041388. 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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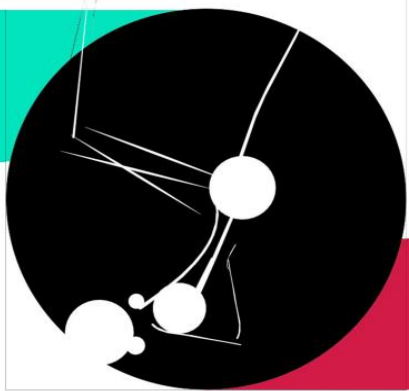
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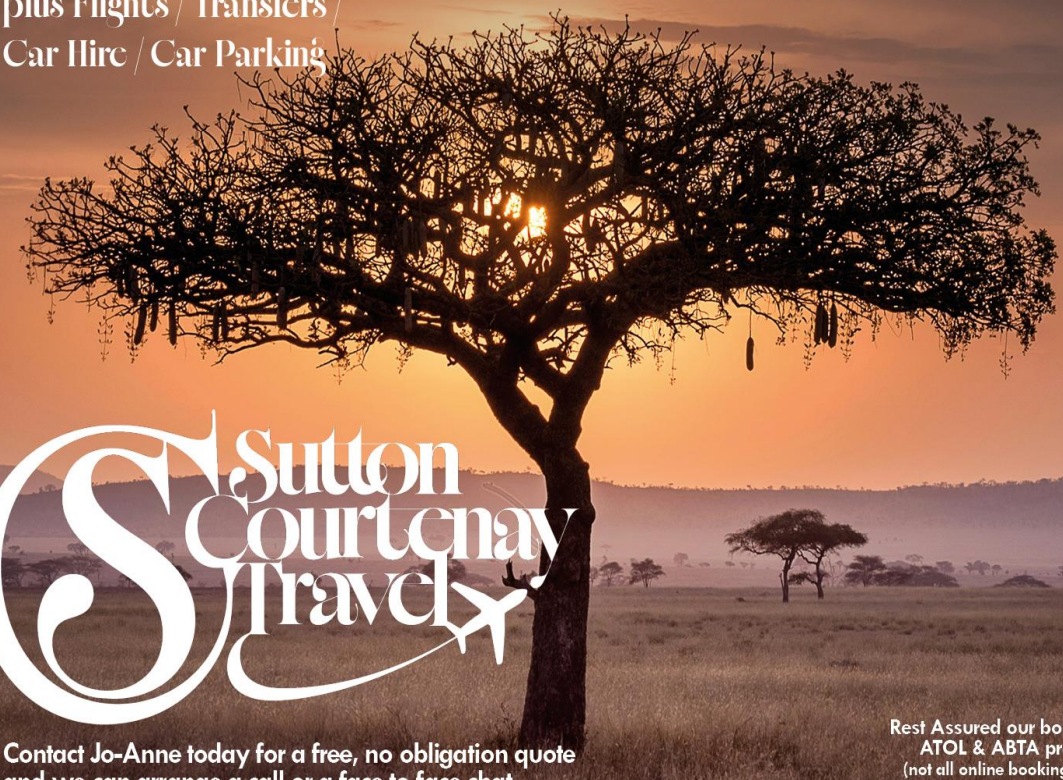
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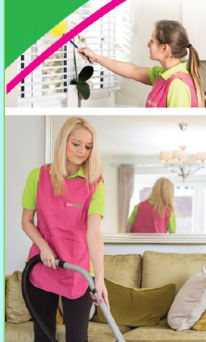
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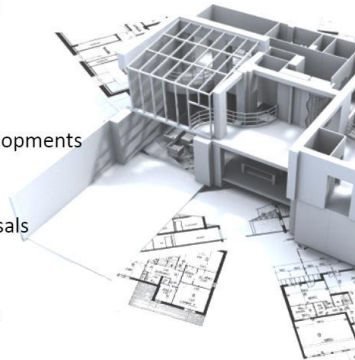


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