

SUTTON COURTENAY NEWS

VOLUME 55 No. 8

OCTOBER 2026



Photo: James Franks

VILLAGE DIARY FOR OCTOBER

Thu 1 & 15	WeCare2 (p. 11)	River Room	11:15-12:30
Fri 2 & 16	Bridge Afternoon (p. 11)	River Room	14:00-17:00
Every Sat	The Abbey Café (p. 17)	The Abbey	10:00-14:00
Sat 3	Community Brunch (p. 11)	River Room	9:30-11:30
Sat 3	Come and Sing Messiah with SCS (p. 13)	Church	12:15 – 18:30
Sun 4	Harvest Festival (p. 9)	Church	11:00
Tue 6	Parish Council Meeting (p. 4)	Village Hall	19:15
Thu 8 & 22	Community Café – (p. 11)	River Room	10:30-12:00
Thu 8	Together in Stitches (p. 11)	River Room	19:30-21:00
Sun 11	Yamaha Music School Open Day (p. 14)	Matrix Arts Centre	Please book
Sun 18	Abingdon Marathon – road closure (p. 19)	Village	09:45 – 14:30
Tues 20	Christmas Choir 1 st rehearsal (p. 10)	Church	19:30-21:00
Sat 24	Movie Matinée (p. 10)	River Room	16:00

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

NOVEMBER 2026 SCN DEADLINE – WEDNESDAY 21ST OCTOBER 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](https://www.facebook.com/SCstayandplay)

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

Matrix Music School: 847264

The Abbey: 847401

Village Hall – SC: scvillagehallbookings@googlemail.com

Cricket Club: drb71@hotmail.co.uk

Nordic Walking Group: Graham Wells 847322

Churchmere Carp Synd.: Andy Barrett 07717 662039

DAMASCUS Youth Project: info@adyp.org.uk

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

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-Fri 16:45. 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.





With the new government now in full swing, I will continue speaking up on issues that matter to constituents across Didcot and Wantage.

I have raised the importance of adequate central government funding for our local councils so that they can provide the essential social services we rely on. I have also spoken about safety concerns relating to new technology advancements such as Meta's Smart Glasses, as well as the regulation of retirement property management companies.

During a Westminster Hall debate on global biodiversity loss, I called for a nationwide broadcast of the People's Emergency Briefing, a film focused on enhancing public awareness of the climate crisis and environmental risks. This summer we saw the real impact of climate change on our area, so I'm really pleased to see many local groups in the constituency organising viewings and working together to raise awareness of this urgent issue.

Across the constituency, I've enjoyed attending the final events of the summer, including BunkFest in Wallingford, Boundary Park's 10th anniversary celebration in Didcot, and a visit to the new Tap Social venue at Milton Park. I also visited businesses such as LTi Metaltech and Crown Packaging, who both create highly skilled jobs for local people while boosting our local economy.

Following my final summer surgery in Cholsey, I met with Andrew from Amwell Springs Brewery, who produces excellent craft beer in the village. I was also pleased to attend the resurfacing and reopening of Hobbyhorse Lane with Cllr Peter Stevens, who has worked hard alongside residents to resurface this important walking and cycling route linking Appleford and Sutton Courtenay. Over a lunch at the Plum Pudding, Milton Parish Council and I discussed pedestrian access and cycle routes to/from Milton Heights, particularly the bridge at the Milton Interchange, which I will continue to work with the County Council to help make happen.

Working with the Mill Brook Restoration Group, we have continued our campaign to restore Mill Brook, including hosting a site visit with key organisations including Thames Water, the Environment Agency and Oxfordshire County Council. This was a major step towards recognising their respective responsibilities and securing a commitment to work together on addressing the issue. I look forward to seeing the results and will continue to monitor progress.

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



Developers' Contributions fund new cricket practice nets at the Recreation Ground

The Parish Council has completed a project to install new cricket practice nets at the Old Wallingford Way Recreation Ground. The project utilised S106 funding paid by developers to the District Council which had been earmarked to improve cricket facilities in the parish, and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds (CIL contributions by developers replace the S106 funding for improvements to community provision).

Although the work was completed by the second week in September, you may have seen notices on the nets stating unavailable for use. The delay in opening up the nets for use, was to allow the aggregate underneath the surface to have time to bed in. This is crucial for the surface to work to its specification for a consistent bounce so that batsmen can practice shots safely and correctly. For the initial 3 months the play on the surface will not be perfect as the materials bed in. All being well, the nets should have opened up for use by the time you read this article. The nets have not been enclosed with gates to enable use by all and at any time.



Please be mindful of the surface and only access the nets if you wish to practice your batting.

The old concrete strips were removed, and the area will be returned to grass. The new location meets the current English Cricket Board guidance on aligning the nets in a north-south position. Sutton Courtenay Parish Council would like to thank those avid cricketers who helped draft the nets specification and Sutton Courtenay Football Club for delaying training and onsite matches at the start of their season whilst the work took place.

We would like to remind visitors to the Recreation Ground that no dogs should be on the main field (including the fenced play area). There is a network of Public Rights of Way around the Recreation Ground. To connect these routes the Parish Council allows

dogs on leads in the cemetery, and there is a path on the southern side of the Recreation Ground which is fenced off from the main field.

Composting and Landfill

During the summer the smells emanating from the landfill and composting operations increased in intensity for prolonged periods. Additionally, a fire at the landfill site on 9th August 2026 again resulted in windows and doors having to be kept closed in the stifling heat. The Parish Council is acutely aware that this is not the first time such incidents have occurred.

Thank you to the residents who reported the smells via the Environment Agency's (EA) weblink gov.uk/report-smell or through the dedicated 24hr incident hotline 0800 80 70 60. Please do remember to ask for and note the reference number of your complaint if using the hotline. Reporting via the weblink will automatically generate an acknowledgement with a reference number. EA only responds with high severity if they receive a high volume of individual, real-time reports. Many of us tend to ignore the low-level smells as we get 'reporting fatigue' – please make the effort and report them as well. The reporting evidence will form a key part of the parish council's strategy in building the case for landfill/composting operations to cease by 2030 as currently mandated, and earlier if these smells/fires persist. The public has a key role to play in gathering the evidence.

Who are the enforcers?

The Environment Agency (EA) is the primary regulator for issues and enforces environmental permits for landfills and composting sites. They can issue formal enforcement or closure notices, issue fines, or prosecute the company and its directors if permit conditions are breached.

The Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC) is the statutory nuisance enforcement authority. Its Environmental Health department deals with "statutory nuisances," including sickening smells. They can issue a Section 80 Abatement Notice. However, it must coordinate closely with the permitting authority EA before prosecuting.

Unfortunately, parish councils have no regulatory or enforcement powers over waste facilities, landfills, or environmental permits. However, it can use its position as an elected community body to exert significant pressure on the EA and VWHDC. To do that it needs the evidence base of which **your** reports form a key part.

Oxfordshire County Council is the Minerals and Waste authority that grants/rejects planning permission applications made by landfill; composting; operators and gravel extraction operators.

The parish council will be debating avenues open to it to make effective representations, and those open to the community, at its meeting in October.

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 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.

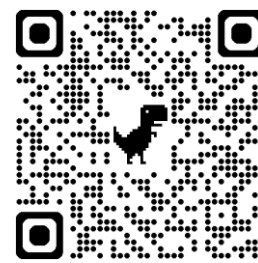
Please note the role is unpaid, as a minimum you would be expected to attend monthly meetings and check your Council email account at least once a week. You would be asked to take an active role in a couple of areas of the Council's work across recreational amenities, the cemetery, planning policy, community 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 6th October, 3rd November, and 1st December 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 Cost cutter, 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.



HOW SAFE IS YOUR ELECTRIC BLANKET?

Free Electric Blanket Testing in Oxfordshire

Get your electric blanket, throw or heating pad tested for free by a partnership group of organisations. They include Oxfordshire County Council Trading Standards, Fire Service, all 5 Oxfordshire District Councils, Volunteer Driver Service and Age UK Oxfordshire.

We have offered this service for 25 years this autumn and from the previous years' testing we know it is as valuable today as it was in the first few years. In 2025 we tested 920 blankets and over 36% failed the safety test; showing how important it is that we keep offering this service.

As part of our winter safety program, we're offering free electric blanket testing to all Oxfordshire residents. Ensure your blanket is safe and warm for the upcoming season.

Testing Dates and Areas:

- **October 2026:**
 - 5/10/26: Didcot
 - 6/10/26: Barton, Headington
 - 7/10/26: Bicester
 - 8/10/26: Witney
 - 9/10/26: Wantage

How to Book:

Pre-book your spot by:

- calling 01865 519800
- go online and book service.oxfordshire.gov.uk/blankettesting
- or emailing duty.officer@oxfordshire.gov.uk.
- On-site time slots available from 9am.

Remember, places are limited, so don't miss out on this essential safety check!

Tea, biscuits and very useful information from partner organisations are available during the testing sessions.

If you can't come to us, we want to make sure all blankets are tested, so we will arrange for a small amount of collections to be made each day.

Stay warm and safe this winter!

Maria Hepworth
Community Engagement Officer
Oxfordshire County Council



A Strong Start to the Year

As I write this at the beginning of Week 3 of the new academic year, there is already a real sense of energy, pride and belonging across Sutton Courtenay CofE Primary School.

After a well-earned summer break, it has been wonderful to welcome our children, families and staff back to school. We have also been delighted to welcome many new families from Sutton Courtenay and the surrounding areas. One of the things that makes our school so special is our strong sense of community, and it has been lovely to see new children settling in quickly, making friends and already feeling part of school life.

Our vision, rooted in the parable of *The House Built on the Rock*, reminds us of the importance of building strong foundations. The start of a new year is always an opportunity to do just that. Across the school, staff and pupils have been focused on establishing routines, building positive relationships and creating classrooms where every child feels safe, supported and ready to learn.

As one Year 5 pupil shared, *"Everyone has been so welcoming. I already feel like I've been here for a long time."*

That sense of belonging is very important to us. We want every child to feel proud of being part of Sutton Courtenay CofE School and excited to come to school each day.

A key part of building those strong foundations is working in partnership with families. Our Meet the Teacher sessions have once again been very well attended and have provided an excellent opportunity for parents to understand expectations, curriculum plans and how we can work together to support children throughout the year. We have also spent dedicated time meeting with parents of children with additional needs, recognising that open communication and strong partnerships from the very beginning help ensure the best possible outcomes for every child.

Miss Reynolds, Year 4 teacher, reflected: *"The Meet the Teacher sessions have been a fantastic opportunity to strengthen relationships with families and share how we can work together to help every child succeed."*

Alongside looking ahead, we have also taken a moment to celebrate the excellent achievements of our pupils last year. We were really proud of our pupils' outcomes in the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check, the Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check and the end of Key Stage 2 SATs. Particularly impressive was the number of pupils achieving Greater Depth, with almost half of the pupils achieving this standard in each tested subject at the end of Year 6.

A special congratulations must go to Mrs de Bruyn, our Deputy Headteacher and Year 6 teacher, whose dedication, expertise and unwavering belief in her pupils helped secure such fantastic outcomes. Most importantly, these results

have given our former Year 6 pupils a strong platform as they begin their secondary school journeys. We wish them every success as they continue to flourish in Year 7 and beyond.

Across the school, children have returned with enthusiasm and maturity. It has been wonderful to see them embracing our values of being Ready, Respectful and Responsible, whether in lessons, on the playground or around the wider school community.

Our staff team has also returned refreshed, energised and excited about the year ahead. We are passionate about continuing to strengthen teaching and learning, inclusion, personal development and our curriculum, ensuring every child receives the very best education and opportunities to flourish. We want every child to leave Sutton Courtenay CofE School not only with strong academic outcomes but also with the character, confidence, compassion and resilience needed to thrive in the next stage of their lives.

Mrs Aitio summed it up perfectly: *"There is so much to look forward to this year. We want every child to feel challenged, inspired and supported to be the very best version of themselves."*

The year is still young, but there is already a real sense of momentum and purpose. We are proud of what we have achieved together so far and excited about what lies ahead. Most of all, we remain grateful for the support of our families and the privilege of serving the Sutton Courtenay community.

We are always delighted to welcome prospective families to Sutton Courtenay CofE Primary School. If you would like to find out more about our school, keep an eye on our Facebook page for details of upcoming Reception Open Events, or contact the school office at office@sutton-courtenay.school to arrange a visit. There is no better way to understand our school than to see it in action and meet the children, staff and families who make our community so special.

Together, we look forward to another year of learning, growth and flourishing.

www.facebook.com/suttoncourtenayprimary

Raluca Chende

Headteacher

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

Summer over, forecasts are for an abnormally stormy autumn following the record 'El Nino' weather patterns so far this year. As our weather continues to sharpen, please prepare your homes and add insulation to make them warmer over winter and cooler over summer.

Currently, in the council, the spotlight is on local government re-organisation. Andy Burnham is a big fan of devolution to local government, running with success the Manchester mayoral strategic authority. Since my last article, Whitehall announced that Oxfordshire and West Berkshire councils would be re-organised into three new unitary authorities: Greater Oxford, North Oxfordshire, and Ridgeway (combining our South and Vale districts with West Berkshire). This is probably the least favoured option as Greater Oxford scoops up surrounding villages and green belt land right up to Culham and Sutton Courtenay bridge, presumably for development to enable Oxford to grow, without the economies of scale required for success.

Although least favoured, each council has started work on the new authorities with elections planned to the new 'shadow' authorities next May, and full transition in 2028.

However, since then, central government announced a 'pause' last week, citing legal challenges worthy of review that could also affect the decision for Oxfordshire and other areas. The minister says this review is likely to be rapid (aiming for October completion), but until it is complete, we must pause and revert to current councils including replacing the May elections from the new authorities to the old councils. In my opinion, this is wasteful as the existing councils will be replaced, so elections to them feels lame. I hope to be able to report with more clarity next month.

NB. The Thames Valley mayoral strategic authority would be the strongest economic powerhouse outside London, which could drive huge potential development if managed properly across the region, and boost the Milton Park, Culham and Harwell campuses of our Science Vale.

Secondly, over summer, Whitehall changed the laws for 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects', allowing Thames Water to continue without any more consultations for the SESRO White Horse mega-reservoir. Although it is obvious that we need better, more strategic, water resources to provide climate resilience for droughts such as happened like this summer, that does not mean we need one SESRO mega-reservoir with all its safety concerns from an over-sized above-ground bunded lake. I will continue to work closely with the council and Thames Water to address safety concerns, ensure flood management is better, and not worse off, and that should an emergency drawdown ever be needed, it will not wash us all away. The council will make this clear in its statutory Local Impact Report, and everyone can still make relevant local representation challenges in a 4-8 week period following formal publication of their plan around November.

In my opinion, fixing leaks, using more grey water, a range of smaller cheaper reservoirs, and diverting water from the wetter West and Wales to the South East would be

quicker and cheaper, and we can continue to make the case for best value for money.

With regard to roads: Steventon lights work is due to finish this month, slightly ahead of schedule, which is good. HIF1 road works continue. Please monitor and report excessive disruption, noise and smells.

The Landfill Liaison Committee that I chair meets tomorrow, when I will find out what more can be done to suppress the bad smells we have experienced this summer. As well as smell complaints, many complaints were lodged for the fire of 9th August. I was in touch with the Chief Fire Officer at the time, who reassured me that there were no toxic fumes or danger to local residents from this fire. To report pollution please call the incident hotline on 0800 807060 or on-line via the following link www.gov.uk/report-environmental-problem.

FCC are committed to finish the landfill by 2030, whereafter, I am seeking a review of the restoration vision for the area to create nicer walking, cycling paths, more natural wildlife spaces and replanned vistas, that make the place pleasurable, and hide the remaining HIF1 road, solar and battery farms and other brownfield developments as much as possible.

As an example of what can be done the newly renovated Hobby Horse Lane between Sutton Courtenay and Appleford looks great with local gravel stone and wildflowers in the border. Photos of before and after are on page 12. Let's hope this is the vision of more restoration to come.

Peter Stevens, Councillor

peter.stevens@oxfordshire.gov.uk

S.C.I.D.S.



S.C.I.D.S.



Sutton Courtenay Incredible Drama Society is back!

The script is written, the team is ready, the village hall is booked ...
now we need you – the cast!

For our 11th year, we will be performing
'I'm Sleeping Beauty, get me out of here!' in March 2027.

Come along to the Sign-up Sunday to find out more.

Date: Sunday 29th November 2026

At: Village Hall

Time: 3 – 4.30pm

What: Cakes, tea, games, songs – and more details

Who: Children from Year 3 upwards, and adults too.

New members as well as returning ones are welcome.

Hope to see you there! Any further queries please contact:

Sally Dubock: sallydubock@gmail.com



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

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



From the Reverend Helen Kendrick (former Rector of the DAMASCUS Parish)

My final letter for the various newsletters of the DAMASCUS Parish comes to you from a wet West Wales where my husband and I are, as I write, twelve days into our retirement. The rain comes as a refreshing delight to the parched Oxfordshire we left behind us just a few short weeks ago and tells us it is definitely Autumn not Summer.

Time moves on and the seasons change, but I take great delight in looking back on my final service in the parish which was held on 30th August when over 260 people filled All Saints' Church in Sutton Courtenay to say farewell. After twenty-three years in the parish, it is hard to find words large enough to hold both my gratitude and my goodbye.

Serving among the churches and communities of the DAMASCUS Parish has been one of the deepest privileges of my life. Together we have shared worship and weddings, baptisms and funerals, school assemblies and village events, quiet conversations, practical challenges, laughter, tears, and many signs of God's grace at work among us. I am profoundly thankful for the trust you placed in me, for the welcome you gave both me and my family, and for the countless acts of kindness that have sustained me along the way. Parish ministry is never the work of one person alone, and I want especially to thank churchwardens, PCC members, the Ministry Team, all volunteers, musicians, bell-ringers, flower arrangers, administrators, pastoral visitors, schools and multiple village organisations, and all who have prayed, served, encouraged and simply turned up faithfully. You have made these years rich beyond measure.

Retirement, and our move to Wales, marks a real ending, and there is sadness in leaving people and places that have shaped my heart. Yet it is also a new beginning, and I go with deep peace, carrying many treasured memories with me – not to mention the hundreds of cards, messages of appreciation and the extremely generous gifts I was presented with at my final service. I was, and am, overwhelmed by your kindness and generosity. Please be assured of my continuing prayers for you all as the parish enters its next season of life. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, and may God bless you richly in the changing seasons and years ahead.

With love and prayers,

Helen

The Reverend Helen Kendrick, Former Rector of the DAMASCUS Parish

Sunday Services at All Saints' during October and November

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

4th Oct	11am Harvest Family Service followed by Harvest Lunch - Donations to go to Abingdon Food Bank and Farm Africa
11th Oct	10.30am All Parish Service at St Blaise Milton - NO SERVICE AT ALL SAINTS'
18th Oct	11am Morning Worship
25th Oct	11am Holy Communion
1st Nov	11am Family Service for All Saints' Day 3pm All Souls' Service See separate advert
8th Nov	Remembrance Sunday 10.45am for 11am Act of Remembrance followed by Service of Remembrance
15th Nov	11am Morning Worship
22nd Nov	11am Holy Communion
29th Nov	10.30am All Parish Advent Service at St Peter's Drayton – NO SERVICE AT ALL SAINTS'

CHURCH DIARY FOR OCTOBER

Please see above for church services

The following pages have adverts for all the events taking place in the church diary, and the village diary on the front page will help you keep tabs on what else is happening in the parish, and when.

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

Holy Baptism

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

George Oliver Paul **FLETCHER** (23rd August 2026).

Sybil Alexandra Grace **STANWAY** (23rd August 2026)

Service conducted by The Reverend Canon Helen Kendrick.

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

Holy Matrimony

We send our best wishes and congratulations to those who were recently married in All Saints:

Carlos Kye **EDWARDS LALI** and Lilly Rose **STAPLETON**
Service conducted by The Reverend Dov Whittle

Rest in Peace

We send our condolences and the assurance of our prayers to the family and friends of the following person whose ashes were interred in the churchyard:

Patricia Mary **WHITE**



THANK YOU

Thank you for making the poppies we wanted so quickly. We now have more than the 250 we desired, but if you've already made some please do bring them to the church and they will get included.

ALL SOULS' SERVICE

A Special Service of Naming and Remembering those who have died
3pm on Sunday 1st November
All Saints' Church, Sutton Courtenay.
Refreshments of tea, coffee and cake will be available afterwards in the River Room.

Invitations will be sent to the next of kin of all those we have conducted a funeral for over the past two years.

But if you wish us to remember someone else – regardless of when or where they died – please add their name to the list at the back of church or let us know at the parish office. We will then ensure their name is read out and a candle is lit in their memory. If you need transport to and from the service, or have any other questions, please contact the Parish Office on 01235 847179 or admin@damascusparish.org.uk



HARVEST FESTIVAL – ALL WELCOME! -

Sunday 4th October 2026

11:00 am Family Service for Harvest Festival

Donations of food gratefully received for the Abingdon Food Bank. They particularly need:

**TINNED SOUP - PASTA AND CURRY SAUCES -
TINNED MEAT AND FISH - TINNED BAKED
BEANS OR TOMATOES - COFFEE OR HOT
CHOCOLATE - UHT MILK - CEREAL - BOTTLES
OF SQUASH - CUSTARD OR RICE PUDDING -
PEANUT BUTTER OR HONEY - DEODORANT
OR SHAMPOO**

and cash (or contactless donations) will be given to
Farm Africa

The service will be followed at 12.15 with a
HARVEST LUNCH in the River Room

If you wish to come to the lunch please add your name to the list at the back of church or 'phone the Parish Office on 01235 847179.

'Give as you can' donations for the lunch will go to
'Farm Africa'.

If you can help by making a Cottage or Shepherd's Pie or providing an Apple Pie or Fruit Crumble then please let us know via the Parish Office, 01235 847179.

Update on the



We have now received 4 tenders and are in the process of choosing a builder. We are busy applying for more grants and the fundraising continues. 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 by improving the Tower and the Bells.



Looking ahead to the season of Remembrance...

Sunday 1st November 11:00 Family Service for All Saints' Day

3pm Service of Naming and Remembering (with the lighting of candles) for All Souls

Sunday 8th November 11:00 Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial

11.15 Service of Remembrance in All Saints' Church with the Reading of the Roll of Honour and the placing of poppies on the cross in their memory

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

We are planning, once again, to make up Christmas Hampers for distribution around Sutton Courtenay in the week before Christmas. If you know of an individual, a couple or a family who would appreciate a gift of a hamper then please let us know their name and address and we will do our best to ensure a hamper is delivered to them.

The aim of the hampers is simply to spread the love of Christmas around the community.

Please email the name and address of the person(s) you wish to nominate (letting us know how many adults and children in the household)

admin@damascusparish.org.uk or

'phone 01235 847179 by **Sunday 6th December 2026**



VILLAGE CAROL SINGING

Thursday 17th December 2026

Every year the Singing Saints and friends sing around the village to raise money for our Christmas Charity which this year is going to be shared between

The Abingdon DAMASCUS Youth Project and the Sutton Courtenay Tower and Bell Appeal

Starting at 6pm we stop at different houses, making our way south to north through the village, ending at The George.

Would you and your neighbours like to host one of our stops?

We don't need to come into your house and are quite happy to sing outside but we do appreciate light seasonal refreshments to keep our spirits up and in good voice!

If so, please email

admin@damascusparish.org.uk



550 Stars Needed!

Hunting for a crafted Christmas tree decoration the weekend before Christmas seems to have become a tradition in Sutton Courtenay and Appleford - which many look forward to. Last year volunteers across the villages crocheted, knitted and sewed over 500 Christmas Trees. This year we're setting the challenge to make **550 stars** – any craft which will withstand being in a plastic bag overnight in midwinter is welcome.



If you can help, instructions are available at the back of All Saints' Church.

Alternatively, 'phone 01235 847179 or email admin@damascusparish.org.uk or contact us via our Facebook page and we'll get them to you. Your crafted stars need to be back in church by **Friday 4th December** so we can prepare them for the Star Hunt. Thank you!



CHRISTMAS CHOIR AT ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

We invite you to join the Christmas Choir to sing at our Christmas Services – particularly the Carol Service at 6pm on Sunday 20th December 2026.

If you are interested, please come along on **Tuesday** evenings from 19:30 – 21:00 in All Saints' Church.

Philip Agg, one time Director of Music and Organist at All Saints, will be leading the practises on

20 October, (not 27th - Half Term),

3, 10, 17, 24 November, and

1, 8 and 15 December.

We can promise some musical joy
(and a bit of hard work!)

All are welcome!

For more details phone the parish office on
01235 847179

MOVIE MATINEE

The next Movie Matinee in the River Room is on
Saturday 24th October at 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 (to match the theme of each film) are available.

BRIDGE AFTERNOONS

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

Fri 2nd & 16th October 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.

Community Café in the River Room



Run by the church for the whole community
Thursday 8th & Thursday 22nd October
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

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)
or just turn up!



COMMUNITY BRUNCH

9:30-11:30

in the River Room, All Saints' Church

Saturday 3rd October

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)

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



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

Hobbyhorse Lane Reopens After Long Local Campaign

An eight-year campaign to restore Hobbyhorse Lane has finally succeeded. Local residents, along with Cllr Peter Stevens and Olly Glover MP, celebrated with Thames Water the reopening of this vital route between Sutton Courtenay and Appleford.

The byway, severely damaged by Thames Water in 2018, has now been fully repaired and reopened. This restoration restores an essential link for local residents and the wider community to walk, cycle or ride horses.

The work was completed following an agreement between local residents, Oxfordshire County Council, Thames Water and FCC. This agreement outlined the necessary steps to reinstate the byway.

Although initially caused by Thames Water, restoration work couldn't begin until FCC resolved the surface water runoff issue from their landfill site earlier this year. The combined damage from Thames Water and the runoff left the lane in a poor, and often unsafe, condition for residents.

Local community groups in Sutton Courtenay and Appleford have consistently campaigned for action on Hobbyhorse Lane, as well as nearby paths along the eastern side of the recreation ground and Old Wallingford Way. After years of discussions with the involved organisations, a solution was finally secured and the route reopened formally in August 2026. This reconnection of Sutton Courtenay and Appleford provides residents with a safe and accessible path. It allows schoolchildren to travel to school by bicycle without using busy highways or being taken by car, while also offering others a chance to enjoy this ancient route once more. Together with Old Wallingford Way, it also reopens a safe circular route for cyclists, equestrians and dog walkers.

Milton Park has long supported the campaign, hoping it will encourage workers living to the east of Milton Park to cycle rather than drive to the site.

Simon Lazare

Photograph left- from left to right:
District and County Councillor Peter Stevens;
Simon Lazare;
Phil Stride - Thames Water;
Elinor Singleton- Thames Water;
Olly Glover – MP;
James Smith - Oxfordshire County Council



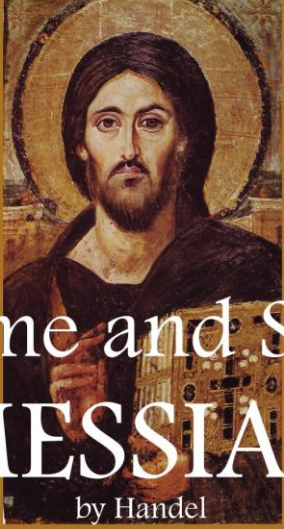
Before



After



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



Sutton Courtenay Singers Sebastian Thomson Music Director



WINTER
CONCERT

Haydn: Nelson Mass
Britten: A Ceremony of Carols
& Audience Participation Carols



All Saints' Church Sutton Courtenay 7:00 pm Sunday
6th December 2026

Tickets £18 in advance, or £20 on the door
Children (12 to 18) & students under 25 half price



for more information: suttoncourtenaysingers.org

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

citizens advice **Oxfordshire** Join our friendly team at
Citizens Advice!

Are you seeking a new challenge, and want to contribute something positive to your community? Citizens Advice Oxfordshire is looking for dedicated and compassionate volunteer advisers to work in our offices

Citizens Advice gives people the knowledge and confidence they need to find their way forward - whoever they are and whatever their problem. Our volunteers play a vital role, ensuring that people receive the advice and support they need.

A Citizens Advice volunteer recently commented on the way many clients are transformed after benefitting from the close attention and help of an adviser. Lewis told the Henley Standard: "There are problems that seem insurmountable to those experiencing them, but we break down those seemingly impenetrable problems into manageable steps, providing a route out of despair. This process has a profound impact on the resilience and happiness of our clients."

What kind of basic skills will you need to volunteer with us? You will need to be confident with computers and have a both a willingness to learn and a positive desire to help people. In the course of your volunteering you'll learn new skills and meet new people by helping clients with problems in the areas of debt management, benefits, employment,

housing and relationships (no prior knowledge necessary). After extensive training you will be giving confidential advice to clients, mainly on the telephone at first, and then later by emails, in person or by using webchat.

We would like you to be available for two sessions per week, either mornings or afternoons or for a whole day. We offer a rewarding, flexible and supportive working environment.

If you would like to discuss these volunteering roles, please email: volunteer-recruitment@caox.org.uk and one of our staff will contact you.



MATRIX ARTS CENTRE

Yamaha Music Schools are celebrating their 50th year in the UK - and Matrix has been around for 38 of these!

We thought it a nice opportunity to share some pictures from our early days - can you spot any Sutton Courtenayers? (Right)



To mark the anniversary, Yamaha Music Schools UK have created a series of videos. Matrix Arts Centre's YMS features in several of these - we'll be sharing the videos on our social media channels this autumn. Interviews were conducted with Lindsay MacKenzie, founder (below), also four Matrix graduates: Sarah Frances Jenkins, Max Blansjaar, Amelia Stay and Miffy Griffiths.



Sutton Courtenay families have a real treasure on their doorstep with Matrix Arts Centre - a nationally acclaimed Yamaha Music School with specialised music education which, unusually, offers children a carefully designed curriculum right through from their early years through to GCSE age.

**YAMAHA MUSIC SCHOOL OPEN DAY - Sunday
11 October**

**For more information see our website
matrixartscentre.org.uk**

Music - Art - Dance - Wellbeing
office@matrixartscentre.org.uk
Matrix Arts Centre is a registered charity



The RSPB Local Group (Vale of White Horse) enjoyed September's talk from Dr Pat Morris on hedgehogs. We run monthly indoor talks (at the River Room, by the church, Sutton Courtenay, and / or via Zoom in deepest winter) and outdoor wildlife walks.

Our next meeting is on Monday 19th October when Roger Wyatt will give a talk on the birds of Oxfordshire - including residents, migrants, and vagrants. Roger worked for more than 30 years for the Natural Environment Research Council travelling around the world, and has a life-long passion for the natural world. Following retirement, Roger was the resident Warden at Withymead Nature Reserve for 3 years.

This talk will be live (no Zoom link) in the River Room, starting at 7:30 pm. If you'd like to join us as a member for the 26/27 season, the cost is £15 for adult (whether or not you are an RSPB member), and free for under-16s. This gives you free entry to this talk, and the others below (see <https://group.rspb.org.uk/vwh/> for more details). You can join using the link on our website, or at a meeting (cash only). For meetings with an option to join via Zoom, members will receive the link via email a few days beforehand. Or if you're only interested in one or two talks, pay £5 on the night or contact us in advance for Zoom meetings. We also run monthly walks at local birding sites, again see our website.

- 16th Nov: Strictly Nature (Simon Booker)
- 21st Dec (Zoom): Birds of Bhutan (Richard Baines)
- 18th Jan (Zoom): Inspiring Avians- what is your favourite bird? (Jeff Clarke)
- 15th Feb (Zoom): Birds, Birding, and a Career in Ornithology (Oliver Slessor)
- 15th Mar: Scotland the Beautiful (Glenda Law)
- 19th Apr: A High Arctic Journey - Svalbard and Greenland (Graham Lenton)
- 17th May: AGM and group 50th anniversary celebration



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

Waste crime knows no boundaries

We have seen the huge impact of large-scale waste crime here on our doorstep with the massive illegal dump near Kidlington which has cost the Environment Agency millions of pounds to clear up. More arrests have already been made in this case and the investigation into others continues.

It is not just these huge waste sites that are the problem though. Each year across the country there are over a million incidents of fly-tipping and many of these have serious consequences for victims. Often landowners, large and small, are left with the clean-up costs and the problem of disposing of someone else's waste.

In Oxfordshire the problem has only been exacerbated by the changes made to our local tips. The County Council's new policy for our local household waste recycling centres is making it harder for many residents to legitimately get rid of their waste, and that can play into the hand of organised criminals.

Thames Valley Police regularly work with local authorities and with the Environment Agency on joint operations to tackle waste criminals. Sometimes operating as seemingly legitimate businesses - some even have waste carrier licenses - these criminals are not just responsible for fly-tipping but are often linked to other forms of organised crime.

They operate across borders, and so must the enforcement. Thames Valley Police's Rural Crime Taskforce frequently operates in London and neighbouring counties to identify and apprehend those responsible for fly-tipping, rural crime and other offending locally across Oxfordshire.

The impact of fly-tipping can be significant. It is not just an inconvenience but can land the victim with a bill for thousands of pounds to safely remove someone else's waste. In the coming months I hope to be able to announce a pilot project across Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire that will allow victims to claim support to deal with some of the costs of the clear up.

This will help victims financially as well as helping to protect our local environment. The intention of the scheme is to increase reporting of fly-tipping incidents and increase the change of catching those responsible.

Matthew Barber
Listening. Serving.
Taking Action.

STAY IN TOUCH
matthew@matthewbarber.co.uk
matthewbarber.co.uk
@matthewbarberUK

JOIN MY WHATSAPP COMMUNITY

Powered by Matthew Barber of DVNCA, Batten House, Green Business Park, Chesham Road, Milton, MK12 9TF

SC CRAFT AND PRODUCE SHOW

A Big Thank You to Our Show Stars!

A huge thank you to everyone who entered this year's Sutton Courtenay Craft and Produce Show. Whether you brought along prize-winning produce, something delicious from the kitchen, beautiful flower arrangements, a carefully crafted creation, or a masterpiece from one of our children's classes, you all helped make the show such a success.

There was plenty of talent on display — and, reassuringly, evidence that some of us have been growing, baking and making things rather more successfully than we might admit at home!

Special congratulations go to Jane Allen, who carried off the honour of Overall Winner.

We would also like to say a very big thank you to Changes Hairdressers, Mathews and Son, Richard Mathews Florist, Costcutter and Hari & Esha Store for their generous donations of raffle prizes. Their support was very much appreciated and helped make the raffle an important part of the day — as well as giving everyone an excellent excuse to buy a ticket and cross their fingers! Thank you also goes to the Parish Council which supported us with a grant to help with the costs of running the show.

The good news is that the show also made a small profit, which will be donated to village charities. So, as well as providing an enjoyable day, your entries and support are helping good causes in Sutton Courtenay.

Photographs by Erin



And if you didn't enter this year, why not have a go next year? You don't need to be an expert. A slightly wonky carrot, an enthusiastic cake or a craft project completed after everyone else has gone to bed could be just the thing. The important thing is to join in — and who knows, you could be our next Overall Winner!

Finally, we'd love to hear your ideas for new classes for next year's show. What would you like to see included? Something creative, culinary, horticultural — or perhaps something completely unexpected? Please send us your suggestions and we'll see what we can do.

Thank you once again to all our entrants, helpers, judges, raffle prize donors and supporters. We look forward to seeing even more of Sutton Courtenay's hidden talents next year!

The Produce Show Committee

suttoncourtenayproduceshow@gmail.com



Saturday Talks at the Abbey

On Saturday 10 October 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.

More info on our website. Places are limited.

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. She 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 retreat will suit everyone from absolute beginners to regular practitioners.

More info on our website.

Sacred Geometry and Sacred Living at The Abbey

The Abbey in Sutton Courtenay will welcome a special two day creative and contemplative immersion into Sacred Geometry on Wednesday 28 and Thursday 29 October 2026.

Inspired by the teachings of renowned architect, artist and thinker Keith Critchlow, the event will explore the relationship between geometry, symbolism, creativity and the deeper dimensions of human experience. Participants will discover Sacred Geometry through talks, demonstrations, practical creative work, discussion, meditation and personal exploration.

Led by Amelia Critchlow (youngest daughter of Keith Critchlow), the programme is designed for artists, creatives and spiritual seekers, with no previous experience

required. The emphasis is on slowing down, reconnecting and allowing ideas and creativity to unfold in a supportive setting.

The experience includes nourishing vegetarian and vegan meals prepared by Naturally Nourishing, with The Abbey's historic architecture and beautiful grounds providing a peaceful environment for reflection and creative practice.

The cost is £250, including all meals, materials and the two days of teaching and activities. Accommodation at The Abbey can be booked separately.

For more information or to book, contact Amelia at info@soulpacehealers.uk or visit soulpacehealers.uk/events. Accommodation enquiries can be made directly with The Abbey at welcome@theabbey.uk.com.

The Abbey Café

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

Love and Knowledge in the Light of Unity: the Direct Path A Beshara Trust Foundation Course (blended learning)



Join us at the Abbey Sutton Courtenay for an introductory weekend to this new foundational course in esoteric education with an emphasis on both knowledge and practice.

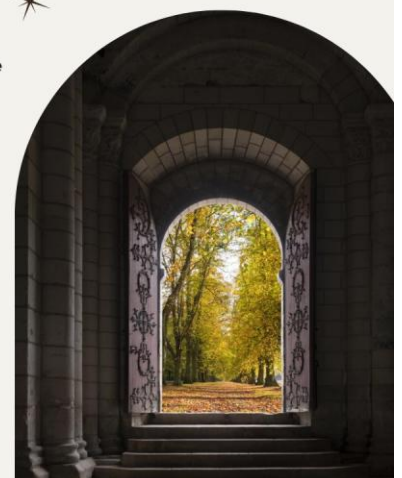
Taking the metaphysics of Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi as a starting point, the course explores what it means to understand oneself and the world in the light of unity.

Weekend 16th – 18th October 2026

More info: www.beshara.org



THE ABBEY SUTTON COURTENAY



IMPROVING YOUR HOME PT 3: REAR EXTENSIONS

Rear extensions are a practical way to add value to a home and are generally more cost-effective than moving when factoring in stamp duty, legal fees and moving costs. A ground floor extension can transform a cramped space into modern, open-plan living, typically a kitchen-diner flowing to the garden with better daylight, whilst a 2-storey extension adds a bedroom and more. Because extensions add floor area, they target the factor buyers value most after location, which is size.

Single-storey rear extensions fall under Permitted Development rights, but a Lawful Development Certificate confirming compliance is required. Detached houses can extend up to 4m beyond the rear wall under Permitted Development, with terraced and semi-detached limited to 3m. These limits increase to 8m for detached and 6m for others with a Prior Approval: Larger Home Extension application. Extensions must not cover more than 50% of the original plot, exceed the height of the existing roof, or use materials out of keeping with the property. These rules protect neighbourhood character while enabling reasonable growth.

Building Regulations approval is required for structural elements, foundations, and roof structures. Steel beams are often needed for open spaces. Modern insulation standards require high energy performance, potentially improving the property's EPC rating. This reduces running costs and enhances market appeal as energy efficiency becomes increasingly important to buyers.

A successful rear extension balances functionality and aesthetics. Designs should harmonise with the existing property, maintaining proportion and coherence. Orientation matters for natural light, especially in kitchens and dining areas. The new space should flow seamlessly from the old, with open-plan layouts combining kitchen, dining and living areas. Large glazed openings connect house and garden, while built-in storage, provision for modern technology, EV charging and renewable energy integration help future-proof the property. Typical build times are 8–16 weeks for single-storey and 16–26 weeks for two-storey projects.

Build costs are calculated per square metre. Homebuilding & Renovating suggests £2,200–£2,500/m² (ex VAT) for a straightforward single-storey extension, rising to £3,000+ for high-spec finishes. Two-storey extensions often cost less per m² because foundations and roofs are spread over twice the floor area, adding twice the space for only 50–70% more cost, according to SDL Property Auctions. Design and approvals usually add 5–15% of build cost plus a 10–12.5% contingency. ROI for a rear kitchen-diner extension is typically 10–15%, higher if the design creates a superior layout or adds an extra bedroom. However, before committing check with local estate agents for comparables and calculate projected sale value minus current value plus all-in project costs. If the margin isn't comfortably positive and you don't value the lifestyle benefit, rethink the scope or specification.

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

PREPARING FOR A FLOOD

Flooding can happen at any time and sometimes with little warning. Therefore, preparation is key to making sure you, your family and your friends are safe, as well as reducing the damage to your home and treasured belongings.

oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/emergency/preparation/

Nine steps to being prepared

Step 1 - Check your household plan, if you have already created one. If not, perhaps write one.

Step 2 - Move people, pets, valuables, grab bag*, sentimental items, electrical equipment and furniture upstairs or raise high off the floor. Make sure to also move your car to a safe or higher land level.

Step 3 - See if you can stay with family or friends in a safe area. Remember to take your grab bag*!

Step 4 - Collect personal information together in a waterproof bag, including insurance details, bank details, essential telephone numbers (including your insurance company and Floodline 0345 988 1188).

Step 5 - Make sure to turn off your gas and electricity before water enters your home.

Step 6 - Alert neighbours and assist the elderly, infirm and those with small children if it is safe to do so.

Step 7 - Block doorways and air bricks and put in place any flood prevention products you may have.

Step 8 - Do not walk or drive through floodwater as there could be hidden hazards!

Step 9 - Keep up to date with your local news and radio stations for further information and announcements via Floodline (0345 988 1188).

A grab bag: Contents depend on individual needs and situation. Ideas for contents include:

important documents and contact information; warm, waterproof, and dry clothing and footwear; a torch; drinking water; medicine; mobile phone or device charger or spare batteries; essential toiletries and, when appropriate, toys for children and baby care items.

Advice taken from Oxfordshire County Council and Gov.uk websites

ABINGDON MARATHON

2026 Abingdon Marathon Notice

We are writing to provide advance notice that the 42nd edition of the Abingdon Marathon is scheduled to take place on Sunday, 18th October 2026. The race start time is 09:00hrs. The route this year has changed very slightly from previous years – please refer to the Course Map attached. As usual, the appropriate signage and marshalling will be provided.

The time limit for runners to finish the marathon will be 6 hours - as it was last year. This is to make sure our marathon is as inclusive as possible; the capacity of the race remains capped at 1500. We anticipate around 1000 runners actually starting on the day.

We have obtained a Special Events Order (SEO) from Oxfordshire County Council which can be viewed on-line: Details of the event can be found on www.oxfordshire.gov.uk > Abingdon marathon

The SEO contains details of road closures. Traffic management services will be employed to manage the traffic at the start and finish of the race, Abingdon town centre and at other strategic locations identified on the course.

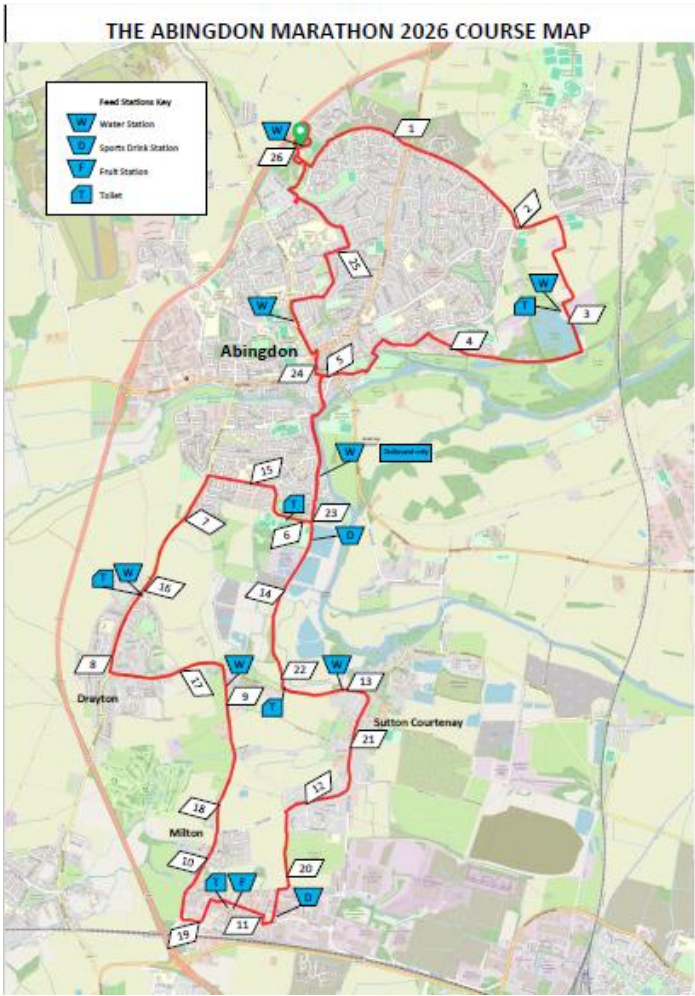
Runners are most likely to be passing through the following areas at the following times:

Market Square and town centre, Abingdon	09:20 - 10:00 and again 11:00 - 14:30
Lambrick Way and Southern Town Park	09:30 - 10:30, and again 11:30 to 14:00
Drayton Village	09:40 - 13:00
Milton Village and Milton Park	09:50 - 13:45
Sutton Courtenay	10:30 - 13:30

Please note that these times are very approximate - the runners will be much more spaced out on the second lap. Everyone is very welcome to come out and cheer on the competitors; the runners always really appreciate the support!

We hope that this will provide you with the information that you need. You may also wish to look at our website which has additional information for local residents and visitors to the area.

Kate Brook and Nichola Poulton
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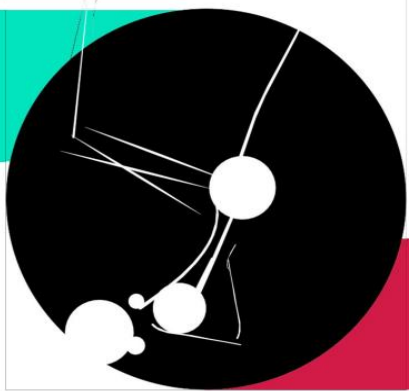
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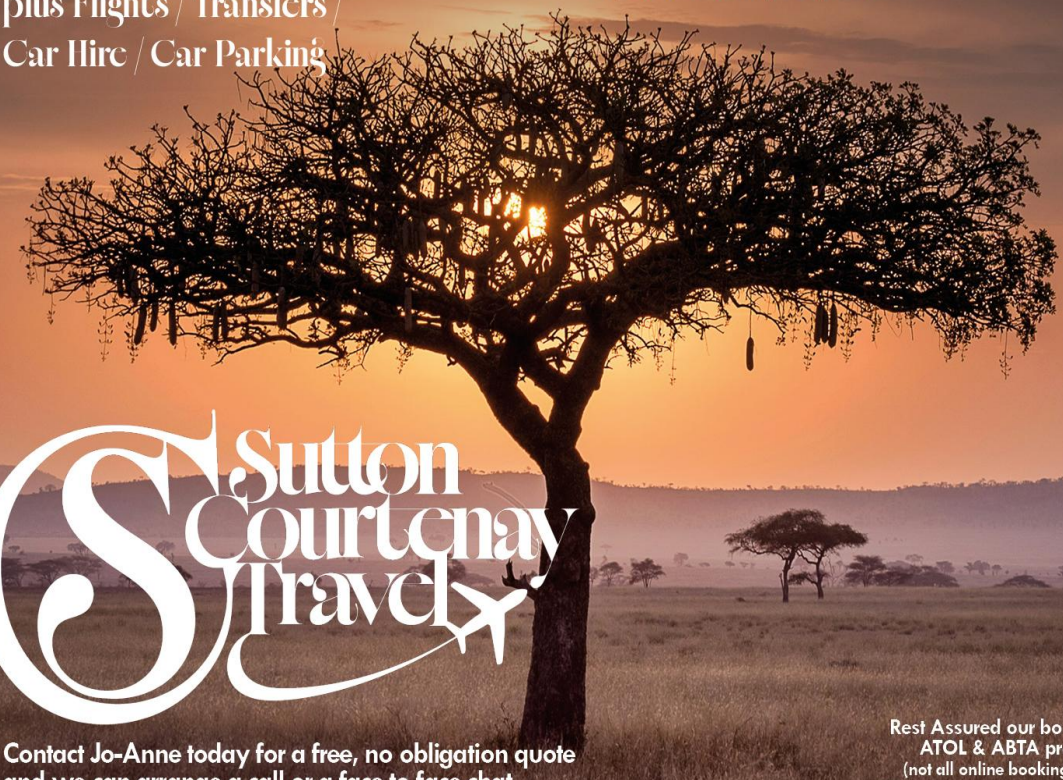
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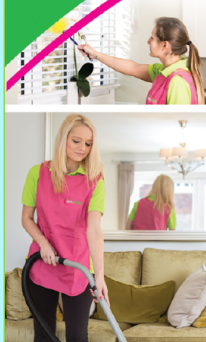
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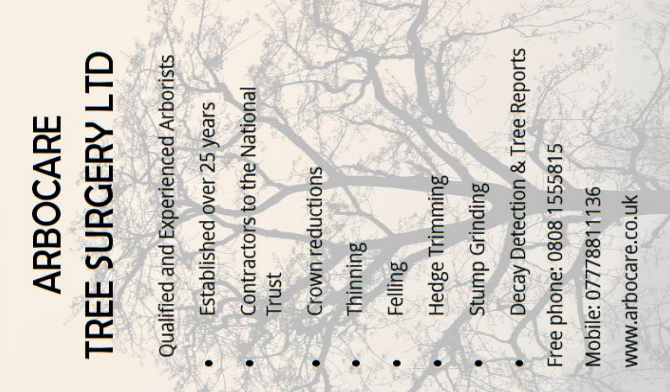
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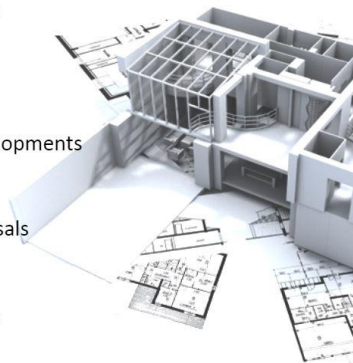


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