

Village Association News

At this time of year, the Village Association normally holds its AGM, when we gather to review and reflect on the past year's events and look forward to planning for the next. However, as the catastrophic pandemic began to influence our lives early in this year's calendar, it became clear that plans for village community events would have to be rethought. We were at least lucky enough to lead one village walk on 12th January, which attracted a good turnout of enthusiastic hikers in the winter sunshine.

With the country in lockdown in April, the Association was overwhelmed by the response from West Hagbourne villagers, as 30 households displayed an imaginative variety of creative and ingenious dragons and St Georges that were very much admired and appreciated by all who passed through the village. Support for the NHS was also a prominent theme, so the committee decided to donate, on the village's behalf, £5.00 for each display to the Oxford Hospitals Charity. A big thank you to everyone who took part and well done to the worthy prizewinners. Sadly, we were unable to hold the teas afternoon, which is usually very popular being one of the few opportunities during the year for us all to gather.

Fortunately, as restrictions eased in June, we were able to hold the Madge Trophy front gardens competition. Our two judges from East Hagbourne enjoyed a tour of the village and were very complimentary of the neatness of the gardens, eventually choosing Green Thatch as the overall winner.

Before the imposed lockdown, the committee were in the early stages of planning a village family afternoon scheduled for early July. We were looking forward to the challenge of holding such an event with a variety of attractions and activities that would appeal to all ages in our community. Hopefully, this will happen next summer.

Possibly our biggest event of the year, the Macmillan Coffee Morning held every September, also had to be cancelled. Attracting not only villagers but also visitors from the surrounding area, all of whom donate so generously to this cause, it was especially disappointing that we were not able to support it in the way we would have wished.

I expect many of you will have recently passed by the bus shelter, the village's war memorial, and seen the new



Madge Trophy overall winner: Green Thatch



Poppy wreath

poppy wreath which was placed there on Remembrance Sunday. The Association is proud to support the Royal British Legion on behalf of the village.

As we come to the end of this most unusual year, it is an appropriate time to reflect on past events. My Chairman's annual report, which is available to read on the village website, summarises the Association's activities of 2020 in a little more detail. However, when I circulated my report to the committee, my covering message included my thoughts on the importance of social interaction, and the role the Village Association plays in strengthening a sense of community and belonging.

Thank you, as ever, for the support you give the events that we endeavour to provide and we hope that we can all gather together again before too long.

From the Village Association committee we wish you all best for Christmas and the New Year.

Margaret Leishman, Chair

Parish Council

At the recent Parish Council meeting, using Zoom, there were some significant decisions. We co-opted a fifth person onto the council and we are very pleased to welcome Tony Baldasera, from the Horse and Harrow. We considered a request from East Hagbourne to contribute to restoration of some furniture on the Sustrans track and agreed to contribute to the restoration of items in the parish of West Hagbourne. We had been asked by planners at SODC to comment on proposals to amend a planning application for a new house in Manor Close. We had objected to the original building on the basis that it was too large. The revised building is still a four bedroom house and we have objected to the revised application on the basis that the house is still too large. However, we have been advised by SODC that the revised application will now be accepted.

Mike Butler, WHPC Chair

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS TO ALL WEST HAGBOURNE RESIDENTS



Is your child 3 or 4 years old?

If your child was born on or between 1 September 2016 and 31 August 2017 you need to apply for a primary school place now. You must still apply even if your child already attends a nursery attached to the school.

You can apply online at: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/primary-admissions

or telephone 03452412487

Deadline for applications is 25th January 2021.



Dragon Competition Children's prize: 6 York Road

other news

What next for COVID?

It has been a difficult year. For months we were told that masks and social distancing were the new normal. During lockdown, students of all ages missed crucial teaching and exams. Differences in the level of support and facilities at home exaggerated differences in learning for pupils. Schools have stayed open in the second lockdown and it appears that this strategy has not vastly increased infection levels in the area.

In the last couple of weeks there have been further positive notices from the government. Firstly the introduction of mass rapid testing seems to have made a difference - identifying nearly 700 people in Liverpool as carrying the virus despite their having no symptoms. This was followed by three (at the time of writing) promising new vaccines. Although these still need to complete the safety evaluations, they all seem to offer excellent levels of protection. If you are in one of the vulnerable categories that get annual flu vaccination then you will know that Didcot rolled out a very efficient flu

vaccination programme, based at the Civic Hall, offering both walk through and drive through appointments. Reducing infection levels, protecting the most vulnerable and ongoing improvements in treatment do promise the possibility of a return to something like normal by summer of 2021.

Hopefully the Village Association will be able to deliver their usual excellent programme of entertainments throughout the year. Parish Council meetings will return to face-to-face so that interested villagers are able to participate, and clubs and societies that we all enjoy will be

fully functional. For some of us, we cannot wait to be able to travel again to see family and friends and it should be possible to plan family celebrations - a double dose perhaps to make up for those missed in 2020? We may have to have annual COVID jabs, alongside our flu vaccinations and we may even choose to continue to wear face masks in busy confined spaces, as many Asian countries do. It will be interesting to see if people continue to work more from home, cutting out long and expensive commutes. Will the exodus from city centres continue? Whatever happens, 2021 will be a year to enjoy.



Harvest 2020



Village walk in January 2020



Bunting on VE Day 2020



Red kites



Rosehips dancing at Bunkfest 2019



Zoom Music Sessions 2020

Vulnerable villagers



The government has advised those classified as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) to continue to take extra precautions. Conditions and illnesses which fall under this category are listed on the government website. SODC have provided a summary of government guidance and how they will be looking to support vulnerable individuals. The Community Hub can help. Please call 01235 422600, or complete the online form at southoxon.gov.uk/community-hub/ / whitehorsedc.gov.uk/community-hub

Don't forget that help is also available via the **West Hagbourne COVID support group**.

SODC are also aware that many people are affected financially by the pandemic and access to food is becoming more of a challenge. They are working closely with the Good Food Oxford network and have produced a spreadsheet of updated free and heavily discounted food services in our districts.

<https://goodfoodoxford.org/>



Goldfinches on bird feeder



Hummingbird hawk moth

Water water everywhere...



2014 Flood

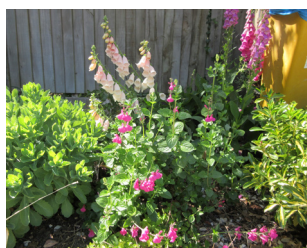
The first we knew was a phone call from a neighbour, and then there was no water pressure. A stroll down York Road quickly revealed the problem, with a lake rapidly forming outside Lizard Bank, as the result of a major water leak. Some water supplies were reconnected that same afternoon, but those of us further up York Road were not reconnected until the early hours of the morning when we were awoken by a terrible noise as the water flowed back into the pipes.

A few days later it was almost back to square one with another leak, again in York Road. This was repaired quickly although the road was closed for a few days. Not long after we came across a major water leak in East Hagbourne!

Bus route



Please note that the new 94/94S timetable starts on the January 4th 2021. From that date only the 94S (school) bus will pass through the village: you will be able to catch the 94 outside the Horse and Harrow.



Village garden

Parish Council

Clerk

Andrew Wise
parishclerk@westhagbourne.org

Councillors

Mike Butler (Chair) 850523
mike.butler@westhagbourne.org

Hugh Lewis 851113
hugh.lewis@westhagbourne.org

Mike Telford 851236
mike.telford@westhagbourne.org

Oliver Doogue 851156
oliver.doogue@westhagbourne.org

Tony Baldasera 07411919718
tony.baldasera@westhagbourne.org

District Councillors

Anne-Marie Simpson
Anne-Marie.Simpson@southoxon.gov.uk

Jane Murphy
jane.murphy@southoxon.gov.uk

County Councillor

Simon Clarke
simon.clarke@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Council Meetings

These are held in Hagbourne Village Hall - see website for future dates. Minutes of meetings of the Parish Council are available online. If you cannot find them, contact the clerk. If you do not have access to the internet, call the clerk and a printed copy will be sent to you. Shortly before the meeting of the Parish Council, the agenda will be circulated to all those on the list. To comply with legal requirements, a copy of the agenda will also be posted on the PC noticeboard.

www.westhagbourne.org/pc_minutes.htm

Planning updates

If you wish to be notified about planning applications that affect West Hagbourne you can sign up for email alerts.

Contact Andrew Wise:
parishclerk@westhagbourne.org

Parish email list

If you wish to be placed on this list, or to check that your entry is correct, please send an email to the Clerk at

parishclerk@westhagbourne.org

HGVs and Potholes

HGVs and potholes are a persistent issue on the roads in the village and beyond. If you can supply a photograph that gives some idea of the extent of a pothole this will help assess the urgency if its repair.

You can do this online at:
fixmystreet.com

Or:
highwaysenquiries@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 08453101111

Web site:
www.westhagbourne.org/noticeboard.htm#potholes

HGVs not delivering to an address in the village should be reported to Trading Standards. If possible, you should take a photograph but definitely write down a description and registration number as soon as possible. Reports can be made to:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/trading-standards/weight-restriction-enforcement>

Keep up to date

www.westhagbourne.org

The website carries information, news and contact details as well as copies of the minutes of all village organisations

other news

Christmas tree Festival

Light is a symbol of hope and of brighter days to come, so let's make the streets and lanes of the Hagbournes shine with glittering Christmas trees! Folks have already signed up for more than 80 trees, (all proceeds to the Church and Homeless Oxfordshire). These will be decorated, lit, and placed in gardens all round the two villages for all to enjoy. Make sure you take the time to visit all of them during Advent.



Thank you!

A big thank you to all those who volunteered for the COVID help group: to Lillie Jamieson for making the first moves and to everyone who gave their time to fellow villagers. We can be very proud of our community spirit.

The Editor

Advertising

This newsletter is entirely funded by income from the advertisements in it. It is edited by Sue Totterdell, with contributions from a number of villagers, designed by Mary Ann Le May, printed by Hugh Lewis and distributed by a group of volunteers. To ensure that it will be able to continue in its present form we would welcome new advertisers. If you have a business you would like to advertise to residents, please get in touch: editors@westhagbourne.org.

other news

Football

Hagbourne United Football Club are looking for new players to play in the North Berks league divisions 4 & 5. The Club will be pleased to

other news

hear from players of all ages and abilities.

For more information contact John Symonds at jesymonds29@gmail.com or call 07831 714 076

can you help?

If you have any news or photos or know of events you think might interest other residents, please contact the editor.

editors@westhagbourne.org



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Marquees

The Village Association has two Marquees available for hire:

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at a cost of £50 each plus a returnable deposit of £75

Tables and/or chairs are also available at £50 plus a returnable deposit of £75

Please note that the Association will not be responsible for any claims for accidents that may occur during the rental.

For advance booking and details please contact **Robert Griffiths** (Woodleys)-
rob.griff@yahoo.co.uk

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West Hagbourne news supplement

Christmas 2020: How COVID has affected us

This edition of the newsletter is given over to how the COVID pandemic affected the lives of residents of West Hagbourne. Lockdown in spring meant that many of us were unable to see family, celebrate family events, or travel. We were working from home, shielding the vulnerable and providing full time child care and education. On the bright side, we walked new footpath routes, people we met always had time for a chat, and we no longer had to fight our way round a supermarket.

Below are some personal accounts of this unprecedented year. The number of contributions has been impressive and we are printing this extra insert to accommodate them. All items will also appear on the village website on a dedicated page. There are also additional photographs.

If you would like to add anything to the items here, please feel free to contact me (editor@westhagbourne.org) or drop off an item at Meadow's Edge. This will be added to the website, where we hope to provide an archive for future village historians.

A few thoughts on our COVID experiences so far

We are in the fortunate position in that, apart from curtailing most of our travelling, socialising and eating out, it hasn't really affected us. Whenever the tedium got us we counted our blessings: unlike many others we didn't have to worry about being made redundant, paying the rent etc. Initially we had the same problems as everyone else in obtaining our grocery deliveries. Thankfully I no longer need to get up in the early hours to book a slot!! The problem was eased somewhat a couple of weeks into lockdown when we set up an alert system with several friends and neighbours. Whenever one of us noticed that Tesco had released another batch of delivery slots they

immediately notified the rest of the group. It worked quite well for as long as it was necessary.

Resident

When Covid 19 first struck it was inevitable that we would look back to earlier epidemics such as the Spanish Flu.

Surprisingly, West Hagbourne remained relatively unscathed compared with Upton with its railway station. Could this be because our village was more isolated then? People could not move around so much; there were no roads, only footpaths. West Hagbourne was very much a farming village and self sufficient. Everybody had a vegetable plot and many kept chickens. "Lockdown" was a way of life. Hopefully our own lockdown will keep Covid away just as it kept away the Spanish Flu.

Sheila Taylor, Pippins

Not so very long ago one of the quickest ways to set alarm bells ringing would be to walk into the branch of any Bank, Post Office or High Street Shop wearing a mask! How times have changed! We live a privileged life style, retired, space around us, health issues well managed and many good friends. Suddenly it is March 2020, and we are Vulnerable Adults (over a certain age). Suddenly no more Volunteer Driving. Suddenly we are in Lockdown, social distancing, frenzied hand washing. Suddenly we are priority customers for Supermarket deliveries to our door. Suddenly no more sleepovers. Now it is obligatory to wear a mask when visiting a Bank, Post Office or High Street Shop! How times have changed!

Rob Griffiths, Woodleys

Being in shielded isolation, due to health issues, we suddenly realised how far removed we were from families and potential support. When we received the note saying the village was setting up a volunteer group, we

were immensely relieved. We are very grateful to those people for their time, generosity & kindness. As a result of meeting people at the door, we have been pleased to put more names to people in the village. Meeting previously unknown villagers and chatting over the fence to neighbours and passers-by we have felt much less isolated.

Residents who are shielding

It's been a strange summer

Usually, along with the rest of Rose Hips (a folk bellydance troupe), I spend most weekends from late spring through to late summer dancing out at various folk festivals and other events. We share spots with Morris sides, clog sides and rapper dancers, or else we grab busking spots and do a set on our own. Folk Weekends: Oxford kicks the season off in April and we usually end the season at Wallingford Bunkfest, a Rose Hips favourite. Not this year, though; as the Covid bug began to bite harder, so the festival cancellations started to roll in. A strange, sad summer.

*Tracey Anderson,
The Square*

The Covid 19 pandemic has probably doubled my time spent in the garden. One day, when the field to the north of Manor Close was being ploughed prior to potato planting, I watched about ten red kites joining the rooks following the plough and catching worms. Kites often perch in my garden and on another day an exhausted juvenile crash-landed on one of my hollyhocks. After 5 minutes rest it was able to fly off. We have had frequent visits to our bird feeder by small flocks of goldfinches. A Humming Bird Hawk moth was observed nectaring on a Mexican Salvia on three occasions in October.

*Malcolm Brownsword,
Manor Close*

The day the music stopped

The day I and my musical compadres, choral partners in crime, the people I spend so much time with each year making transcendental music, had an email from our conductor saying he'd taken the decision to halt all rehearsals and concerts.

I'm a member of three choirs in Oxford – vOx Chamber Choir, Opus 48 (a medium sized choral society) and Amici della Voce (an octet) and I would have been performing perhaps 15 concerts this year but thanks to Covid-19 that's all gone...

At the beginning of the pandemic singing was seen as almost a dangerous activity – and a huge amount of work was done by prominent singer/scientists regarding aerosols/droplets and the actual dangers of singing and playing wind or brass instruments..... There have been moments of sunlight – in the summer the octet managed to perform outside the Blavatnik in Oxford and a few of us have been able to get together in gardens, but there's not much joy on the horizon.

If you're involved in a hobby with other people, you'll recognise the camaraderie of these groups, and in the case of singers the knowledge that we're all working towards a common purpose, to produce exquisite performances for people to enjoy. The health benefits of singing need no introduction, many studies have been done. It's a tough time for musicians – most are freelancers and many of my acquaintance do not qualify for any state help, meaning they've had no money since March. I'm crossing everything that we can soon get back to performing, with enough audience to make concerts financially worthwhile. If music (and the wider arts in general) fall by the wayside, we will all be the poorer for it. Here's to a musical 2021.

Meryl Davies, Manor Close

West Hagbourne news supplement

Life in 2020 at Fermain, York Road

Like most people we have found life a real challenge with our day-to-day lives being so different from previous years. Albie (12) has been at home for many months. Maisie & Justine are both key workers so worked throughout at Harwell School and at the Bank. Home schooling and the discipline have been tough for both pupil and parents in attendance, with many distractions to impact effectiveness. The internet has been a lifeline allowing us all to function in some sort of normal way with Nathan & myself both working from home. I know Amazon deliveries to our house have increased as the dogs bark every time they come up the drive. Justine's Mum (Ros) has joined our bubble, so she is not alone and can pop in at weekends. Nathan will be 21 this month, which would normally involve a party or two - of course this will now have to wait. Not seeing family and friends for weeks on end has been no fun and has tested our family relationships to the full. We started quite well, playing family games and cards to break up the day. Although this has slipped a little, we have found other routines to live by and see us through. We sadly lost my mum (Maureen) in July to old age; it was difficult not to be able to visit her in hospital until the last few days, but the Royal Berks looked after her very well. We are all looking forward to the Christmas break and really cannot wait for 2021, assuming it can't be any worse than 2020!

Ian Thomson, Fermain

WHPC

The Parish Council now meets using Zoom. This has proved very useful for councillors but villagers need to contact the Clerk for the link to the meeting. We have now also signed up for online banking so that we no longer have to pay people by cheque. Previously the Clerk had to come to the homes of two councillors and leave a bag with the papers and the cheque book outside the house. After

signing the necessary cheques, it would be left for the Clerk to collect. Now using a card and card reader, authorising payments is much quicker and easier. It is something that had been considered for some time, but COVID restrictions have made it necessary.

Mike Butler, Chair WHPC, Blissetts

A week after the new kitten arrived, so did Lockdown. It was tricky getting him checked over and inoculated. After making an appointment with the vet, we had to wait in the car park while someone took him away to be looked at.

The Morris Dancing world seemed to take to Lockdown with enthusiasm. With the discovery of Zoom it was off, off and away. People took part in the 'Lone Morris Festival' on Facebook on Saturday 21st March with musicians and dancers dressed in kit and filming themselves dancing in their gardens or even the street. Further events included 'St George's Day Bash' and the 'May Day Lone Morris Festival' silently at dawn so as not to disturb anyone. There are Live to your Livingroom concerts and Ceilidhs in your Kitchen to join in with. I have even started having music lessons.

I experienced many positive outcomes: no traffic - you could barely hear the A34; the dawn chorus was really loud, and a long succession of sunny days. People seemed to be kinder to each other, posting supportive messages to those unable to work or suffering from severe depression with loneliness.

Mary Ann Le May, Blissetts

2020 At Manor Farm - What a strange year!

Sadly, we had the cancellation of our Family wedding in France and then the same with our trip of a lifetime to Chile and Argentina. We had pulled down our old and out of

date corn store/drier just before Covid 19 set in, then as lockdown began we wondered if the new one would ever be built in time for harvest - it was, literally just as we started. Being farmers, producing food, we were able to keep working which was a relief as farmers need to be out on the land!! The harvest wasn't as productive as last year and the climate seems to be so extreme, either all sun and hard ground or all rain and a mire! All went well until it was time for the potatoes to be dug. Again this year it made such a mess, really damaging the soil structure, that I doubt we will do it again.

Spring and early summer were beautiful and it was wonderful to actually be in the garden and hear the birdlife without the disturbance of traffic on the roads and planes in the sky, actually quite surreal. I think it all made us appreciate where we live in West Hagbourne, far more fortunate than many.

Sue Lay, Manor Farm

When COVID19 hit us all in March it was devastating for so many of us. Not only did it hit the hospitality industry and other businesses extremely hard it has been heart-breaking to see people lose their loved ones to this pandemic. We felt lucky to have received incredible support from the government & also our landlord (Hawthorn Leisure) has been incredibly supportive (more so than some of the larger Pubco's). In the first lockdown we concentrated on redecorating the pub and tidying the garden up & making everything COVID safe. It was lovely to see people walking by during the good weather in the first lockdown and to say hello or have a quick chat. When we reopened it was so lovely to welcome our customers back, although in a vastly different way. The customers who felt comfortable enough to return adapted to the 'new Norm'

It has been immensely tough both financially & mentally on the both of us but we have remained positive and we really hope that after the second

lockdown we can recover and prosper and with the support of the community we believe this is possible.

See you on the other side.

*Tony & Helen,
The Horse and Harrow*

Saying goodbye

The emptiness of the church, chairs distributed sparsely through the nave, merely emphasised the simple beauty of its architecture. We were gathered for the funeral of Mike Duck, long time resident of West Hagbourne, but this was in the time of COVID. Mourners were limited to 30 people meaning friends of many years' were unable to attend. Chairs were grouped into family clusters, with more than 2 metres separation. Whilst the occasion was inevitably sad, the music was stunning. With those present prevented from singing due to fears about aerosol virus transmission, mumbled congregational hymns were replaced by uplifting recordings for us all to enjoy, something Mike himself would have appreciated. More of Mike's friends were able to join the congregation for the interment.

*Sue Totterdell,
Meadow's Edge*

The West Hagbourne volunteer group did more than just collect prescriptions and shopping during the summer lockdown. Michael Gould, a resident in the village, reached out to the volunteer group for some shopping but it was quickly evident that he had a bigger health issues that were being aggravated by his poor living conditions. These issues were escalated to our local Councillor Anne - Marie Simpson who was able to assist Michael in getting rehoused to a safer home in Didcot where he has settled and is very content. Michael would like to thank everyone that supported him and helped him out of his very difficult situation.

Lillie Jamieson