

# The Beckley and Stowood Newsletter

**News Views and Comment from  
around the Parish Autumn 2020  
Produced under the auspices of the  
Beckley and Stowood Parish Council**



## PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

The Examination in Public of the SODC Local Plan started on 14 July presided over by Jonathan Bore MRTPI, the same Inspector who carried out the examination for Oxford City's Local Plan. It was conducted using Microsoft Teams and streamed live on the SODC YouTube channel.

Despite the fact that the Government had strengthened regulations to protect the Green Belt in 2019, 6 out of the 7 strategic development sites are in the Green Belt, including Land north of Bayswater Brook (LnBB), with 1,100 houses which spans our parish and Elsfield, Stanton St John and Forest Hill and also affects Barton and Sandhills. Approximately 20% of our parishioners who live at Wick Farm and Lower Farm will be surrounded by the development, instead of fields in the Green Belt. This development was to include alleviation of the traffic gridlock on the ring road and Headington roundabout either by reconfiguration of the Headington roundabout or by a link road/Headington roundabout bypass. This would start from the Elsfield junction on the ring road and go across the site, Bayswater Road and fields to the A40 at Sandhills. This prompted Lincoln and New Colleges to propose extension of the site along the route of the extended 'Link Road' through the fields of SSJ and Forest Hill to develop 4,500 homes (please see map on the Beckley web site). Sydlings Copse and College Pond, a very important and fragile SSSI, is on the edge of the development and is at great risk.

Our group, representing local parishes and communities, worked very hard and effectively together to oppose development in the Green Belt around Oxford and LnBB in particular. With the help of a Planning Consultant, we prepared 'Hearing Statements' on each Matter and Issue that concerned LnBB. She also helped us prepare for the hearings where we spoke. We would also like to thank all the local residents who completed hearing statements to help our case.

On Friday 7 August, Mr Bore gave his summing up at the end of the Examination in Public. Although these may not be his final recommendations, he is going ahead with the whole Plan with very few modifications, despite the housing numbers being inflated by 5-8,000 homes.

For LnBB, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and SODC have not come to any decision about new transport infrastructure for alleviation of the ring road and Headington roundabout, so OCC suggested the policy of encouraging a low car use policy with no traffic alleviation. The Inspector grasped enthusiastically at this and said it was the 'go-to sustainable transport solution', although no assessment has been carried out and it is not a solution. The developer was also enthusiastic about this, as the site is probably not financially viable with traffic alleviation measures. For local residents this is the worst scenario, as it is likely to cause much longer queues on our local roads, gridlock on the ring road, Headington roundabout

and New Marston and local roads used as rat runs.

We are investigating what action we can take against adoption of this Local Plan, since it has no democratic mandate and the current SODC administration want to revise it completely. In the meantime please sign this petition - 'Stop Green Belt Destruction in Oxfordshire' <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/stop-green-belt-destruction-in-oxfordshire>

We would like to thank the Parish Councils and Meetings of Beckley, Elsfield, Forest Hill, Sandhills, SSJ, Horton cum Studley and the Gresswell Environment Trust for funding our planning consultant.

Members of our Group are: Beckley – John Walsh, Ginette Camps-Walsh; Elsfield - Lisa Buchan, Oliver de Soissons; Forest Hill – Andrew Waite Brown; Sandhills – David Adams; SSJ- Andrew Clark, Nicola Mallows for the Gresswell Environmental Trust, all working with Barton - Angela Dickinson and others.

**More information is available on the Beckley and Stowood web site including a map. [beckley-and-stowood.gov.uk](http://beckley-and-stowood.gov.uk)**

### **INSPECTOR BORE'S LETTER 28/8/20**

Late on Friday evening, Inspector Bore's letter was issued containing his '*preliminary conclusions on the key matters that arose during this examination*'. This was an expanded version of his summary of 7 August with more details. For LnBB there are 3 main issues – 1. Sydlings Copse and College Pond SSSI; 2. The Green Belt and 3. the Transport Infrastructure.

1. **SSSI** – Contrary to the Inspector's comments no evidence-based mitigation policies to ensure that the SSSI is not damaged have been proposed or agreed with Natural England. It cannot be said that the SSSI will be protected.

2. **The Green Belt** – The Inspector states that the development of the Green Belt sites around Oxford will not cause urban sprawl from Oxford. There is no substantiation for this comment. The Inspector did agree that the country-

side would be encroached. For LnBB specifically there is no new defensible boundary and no mitigation, both of which are required under Green Belt regulations.

3. **The Transport Infrastructure** - The third new solution, which was not included in the Local Plan, was discussed with the site promoter at the hearing. Other participants were not given an opportunity to comment. This proposes using "*Oxford City's planning policies concerning reduced car use and sustainable transport priorities*". This has not been assessed or modelled at all and it will not address the congestion on the ring road and Headington roundabout. It will make commuting into Oxford or around the ring road for current residents even more difficult and lengthy. 'Connecting Oxford' and the Oxford City bus gate scheme will also both increase traffic on the ring road and Headington roundabout and their effects have not been assessed either. The letter states "*The suggested wording has been agreed with the County Council and site promoters and can be taken forward for consultation as a main modification.*" This agreement is not on the web site and appears currently not to be available to the public.

The Inspector's letter can be found on the SODC Local Plan Examination web page. The "Main Modifications" of which the 'reduced car use scheme' is one, will go out to public consultation for a month. We will inform everyone so they comment.

### **GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS – "PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE" and "CHANGES TO THE PLANNING SYSTEM"**

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Affairs has published two white papers for consultation on changing the planning laws to make it easier and quicker to build more houses.

In 'Planning for the Future', land will be zoned into three categories: –Growth; Renewal ; and Protection.

The Green Belt is supposed to be protected, but we may not be convinced. The white paper can be found at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/907647/MH-CLG-Planning-Consultation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907647/MH-CLG-Planning-Consultation.pdf) and consultation is open until 29 October, with 25 questions <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/MH-CLG-Planning-for-the-Future/>

The other white paper on planning is at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/907215/200805\\_Changes\\_to\\_the\\_current\\_planning\\_system\\_FINAL\\_version.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907215/200805_Changes_to_the_current_planning_system_FINAL_version.pdf) with the consultation open until 1<sup>st</sup> October here 35 questions - <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/MHCLG-Changes-to-the-current-planning-system/>  
Both will be discussed at the Parish Council meeting on 3 September so if you have comments please let Sue Cox our Parish Clerk know. [clerk@beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk).

### **SODC CHANGES TO REFERRALS TO THE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

SODC has introduced concerning changes to planning, restricting local democracy.

In the past, the Parish Council was consulted on most planning applications in the parish (apart from agriculture buildings and a few other specialist categories). If the Parish Council did not agree with the Planning Officer's recommendations it was referred to the Planning Committee made up of democratically elected councillors. The local District Councillor could also 'call in' any contentious applications which would not be automatically referred to the planning committee.

These referrals by the ward councillor to the planning committee were reported as being stopped, but this has now been revised/clarified by SODC so they can still 'call in' contentious planning applications to be decided by the planning committee, but this will not happen automatically as previously, so parish councils and others effectively have little say in plan-

ning applications if they disagree with the Planning Officer unless the local councillor calls it in.

This measure was to be reviewed in six months, but now will be reviewed in October. Planning Officers are being encouraged to consult with Parish Councils and others who object to a planning application, which is seen as a positive move as in the past all comments by the PC appear not to have been considered. However, the withdrawal of the democratic right to refer applications to the planning committee is very concerning.

### **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

The Steering Group is revising the policies following a telephone conference with the SODC Neighbourhood Planning Officers and reviewing the submissions and evidence from Christ Church (owners of Lower Elsfield and Wick Farm), Natural England, BBOWT and other important parties in the SODC Local Plan Examination for the part of LnBB included in the Plan. These further revised policies will be reviewed by our specialist planning consultant. There are now procedures in place to progress Neighbourhood Plans under COVID-19 restrictions similar to those used for the Local Plan.

### **TENNIS COURT**

The tennis court is now re-opened for play. The weed problem has been sorted out, but there is still a risk of weeds coming through and damaging the court and basketball area. If you see a weed or bump appearing on the surface please let Sue Cox the parish Clerk [clerk@beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk) know ASAP, so it can be sorted out. There is no booking system, so please respect the fact that others may want to play. Please also respect social distancing when using the court and follow the advice on the signs. The PC hopes you enjoy playing on it!

## **PLAYGROUND REOPENING**

Following an inspection by members of the Parish Council, the playground has now reopened. Please ensure that children using the playground do so safely and respect social distancing for everyone's safety.

## **COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS AND PARISH COUNCIL WORKING**

The Parish Council held the July meeting in person at the village hall using appropriate social distancing. There is no meeting in August and the next Parish Council meeting will be held at 8 p.m. on Thursday 3 September (subject to any COVID-19 restrictions that may be in place at the time.)

**CANCELLED - FIREWORKS SATURDAY 7 NOVEMBER** - Sadly due to the uncertainty over the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions that may be in force in November, the Parish Council has decided that the fireworks need to be cancelled this year. They will be back in 2021. **Ginette Camps-Walsh**

**Beckley and Stowood Parish Council Website - <http://www.beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk/>**

**Parish Council contact - Sue Cox Parish Clerk - [clerk@beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk) or 01865 351415**

**NO EXPRESSWAY GROUP**  
[noexpressway.org](http://noexpressway.org)

The Ox-Cam expressway remains 'paused' but is still not officially cancelled. Two current public consultations concern Arc development, however. In July, England's Economic Heartland (EEH) launched its (>1000 page) Draft Transport Strategy covering both rail and road connectivity across the region, and a pathway to transport decarbonisation (currently the greatest greenhouse gas producer of all the energy sectors): full details can be found at <http://www.englandseconomicheartland.com/Pages/transport-strategyconsult.aspx> and responses must be made before October 6th.

In August, the Government released a 'Planning for the Future' White Paper, a proposal to transform existing planning laws that are, it is said, hampered by red tape and, in the Prime Minister's own words, "newt-counting delays". Areas would be zoned and, with very few restrictions, substantial development could take place in Growth areas, some development in Renewal areas and only restricted development in Protected areas. It is not clear that these new proposals would actually address the key issues of houses and their affordability, especially for young couples and key workers.

The White Paper, to become law by the end of the present Parliament, casts doubt on the future of all Local Plans, without which, in John Howell's words in the recent 4 Parishes Newsletter, "we are at the mercy of developers". Indeed, we will be. Details of the White Paper and consultation can be found here; <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future>, with responses due by 29<sup>th</sup> October.

A further consultation on new ways of assessing housing need can be found here; <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-the-current-planning-system>, with responses due by 1<sup>st</sup> October.

**David J. Rogers, Professor of Ecology (Retired), Department of Zoology, Oxford University**

## IONA SERVICE 20 SEPTEMBER 6PM

Hi Everyone!

We'll be re-starting the Iona services in Beckley Church from **Sunday 20 September at 6pm** (and thereafter the third Sunday of every month).

Our theme this year is 'Spirituality and Stewardship', but we will take a short pause from this to reflect in a general way on Coronavirus and lockdown, reviving the S&S theme in the New Year.

Please do feel free to let others know we're starting the services again. We very much hope you're able to make the service in person as we don't have the ability to film the service for on-line use. Please don't forget to bring a face-mask as these are currently mandatory in churches.

Best wishes

Kate & Emma [kate.lea.home@gmail.com](mailto:kate.lea.home@gmail.com)

## BECKLEY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Arrangements for September

Dear All

I hope this update finds you safe and well.

It is the Government's current intention that all primary children, in all year groups, will return to school full time from the beginning of the autumn term.

In order to manage risk, things will be a bit different when children return to Beckley School for the new academic year. Some of our measures include staggered arrivals and departures, minimising contact and maintaining distance, ensuring everyone at school cleans their hands more regularly than usual and enhanced day-time cleaning.

The Government has set out clear guidelines on what schools are expected to teach when pupils return in September. We will continue to provide an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects. There will need to be changes to some subjects - such as PE and music - to ensure they can be delivered as safely as possible. We are also making plans for the improved

provision of home learning, including the use of new technologies such as **Google Classroom**, to ensure that children may continue to be educated at home if this provision is required.

Once school has reopened in September and we are confident that processes are working well, we hope to reintroduce many of the extra-curricular activities we have been able to provide in the past. This will also be kept under review as it is our ambition to restart such activities when it is safe to do so.

As the overall situation continues to be fluid, Beckley School will remain alert to both local and national developments and we are prepared for further changes if they are needed.

Staff are very much looking forward to welcoming children back to school in September.

Best wishes



Mark Szortowski

Headteacher

[beckleyschool.com](http://beckleyschool.com)



*Finding our way home!*

## LETTER FROM THE NEW VICAR

Hi everyone

Thanks so much for giving me the opportunity to say hello in your village magazine. It has been lovely getting to know a little about the village over these last two months. It is hard to believe I have been here that long. The time has whizzed by in a flash!

So, what have I been up to that you might be interested to hear about? Well, my first weekend in post I met villagers in the churchyard, socially distanced as required. It was a beautiful afternoon, and I think enjoyed by all except for the person that found they were sitting on an ants' nest!

I had a delightful visit to the School one morning, meeting the headmaster and Chair of Governors, and seeing staff and pupils working hard just before the holidays. As a result of the visit I was invited to take part in the leavers' service. What a privilege to be part of that, despite the stress of the IT not working for me – this was despite a trial run with one of my sisters the day before to make sure all was well! ☹️ A sign of the times we are living through at the moment. Zoom, Google Meet, Skype, FaceTime etc! Each slightly different and each with its own quirks! It was a delight to say a few words, to pray for the leavers, to bless them, and send them off on their next adventures in life. I very much look forward to developing my relationship with the School in the new school year.

No doubt some of you might have spotted me walking around the village with Bertie my yellow Labrador puppy, now 10 months old. Collecting him was my last 'essential journey' before lockdown. I have had some lovely conversations with people we have met on our walks. We have walked around the edge of Otmoor from Church Street. We have been on a long walk from Otmoor Reserve over to Noke and round. Fortunately, I had a guide for that one.

I was also determined to walk to each of the churches in the Four Parishes Benefice from the Vicarage. I have managed three so far. Walking to Beckley has the attraction of walk-

ing past The Abingdon Arms – last weekend I had friends visiting and we managed two walks there and back, stopping off for a drink in the pub garden to refresh us ready for the walk home – so twice I stopped just short of making it to the Church! 😊 Today I made the walk to the Church with Bertie for a meeting. The walk there was great, but stupidly I did not stop for a drink on the way back and we got caught in a downpour. I returned home looking like a drowned rat! Note to self – as a friend said – there is always time to stop for a drink! If I had, I would have avoided the especially strong winds and driving rain – the rain stopped shortly after my return home!

I love the Beckley mast being a focal point towards Beckley and home when I am out and about. It may be unusual admiring a mast, but there is a sense of it drawing me in when I am out, especially as I get my bearings. Friends living in sight of the mast also use it as a focus towards where I am, which is a rather lovely thought.

It has been wonderful opening the church again for worship, despite it not being quite as we would like, especially with no singing. Hopefully, that may change soon. We will have to wait and see. I look forward to developing what we can do over the coming weeks and months, depending how guidance progresses. We are especially keen to restart the family services and children's work as soon as possible. Most importantly, we must keep safe in these difficult times.

I very much look forward to getting to know the village and you all over time. If ever you need anything, please do get in touch. Sometimes a friendly ear just to sit and listen can be a great comfort. I look forward to being part of your community – our community. Thank you for the welcome I have received so far, and here is to good times ahead together.

God bless. Anthea

**Anthea Beresford 01865 351839**  
**[anthea@fourparishes.org.uk](mailto:anthea@fourparishes.org.uk)**

## **MEET ME AT THE MUSEUM – RECENT BOOK READ BY THE BECKLEY BOOK GROUP**

Written in 2018 by Anne Youngson, this is a debut novel shortlisted for the Costa ‘Best First Novel Award’ and which won the inaugural ‘Paul Torday’ prize for debut fiction by writers over sixty.

In 1964 a group of school girls, including Tina and Bella communicate with a Prof Glob in Denmark about their history project on the 400BC peat bog Tollund man found in 1950 (and also the subject of a Seamus Heaney poem). (See Janey Stevens’ article on “Bog Bodies”). As a result, he dedicates his book to the school girls.

When Tina becomes pregnant, she is forced to marry a farmer and life becomes a constant toil of mundane duties and no appreciation. She says her life has been "sacrificed ... to the social standards of my parents and their peers" and "the relentless timetable of food production, including tending chickens and slaughtering pigs”.

Tina and her friend Bella always meant to visit the Tollund man museum, but never got around to it. Some 40 years later Bella dies of cancer and thus Tina loses the one spark of excitement in her life. With sadness that she and Bella will never go to Denmark, she decides to write to Prof Glob for more information about the Tollund man.

However, Prof Glob died many years earlier and the letter is answered by Anders Larssen, Glob’s successor, the lonely curator of the Tollund man museum. There follows 18 months of gentle and crafted letters that start impersonal and technical, but gradually blossom into intimate revelations about their lives. Often mundane information becomes entwined in discussions around the meaning and purpose of life, particularly its loneliness. I especially like the description of how when picking raspberries one always misses some, but they may be found when returning: similarly, life can be

seen from a different angle. There is much appreciation of each other’s letters, despite the fact that they are such different characters with such different lives.

We gradually learn about the unfulfilled and difficult lives each has led, and how the letters support them, and allow them to see things differently. “Our letters have meant so much to us because we have both arrived at the same point in our lives. More behind us than ahead of us.” The letters give them courage to move on from their disappointments and losses, and also to cope with new challenges in their current lives.  
**John Stradling**

## **PRESERVATION AND CONSER- VATION OF BOG BODIES**

When I was lecturing in Archaeological Conservation at the University of Durham, I would introduce students to the Iron Age Tollund Man. Given this is a central motif in Meet me at the Museum, it was suggested that I give you a short description on how he came to be preserved in a peat bog for about two thousand years and, when excavated, conserved for the future. ‘Bog bodies’ from any era are, perhaps, more common than thought. For example, between 1750 and 1995, over ninety-six were recorded in Ireland alone. What is needed for their survival is primarily an absence of oxygen and presence of water. Added to this, the sphagnum moss present in peat-bogs both makes the bog acidic and ‘tans’ the skin much like in leather production. If the temperature is low and the body is buried deliberately or becomes covered over quickly, all these factors come into play, preventing the microbial decomposition of the organic parts of the body. Also often preserved are clothing or items made from animal material such as wool and animal skin. What does not survive in these acidic conditions is the mineral part of bone.

Excavation of such bodies can be disastrous for their survival: water keeping the tissue inflated begins to dry off and microbes get to work .

If left to dry out, the material shrinks and becomes distorted. Thus, the first step in archaeological conservation is to keep the moisture in and the microbes at bay, preferably by keeping the find wet and cold, as using biocides can interfere with later treatment. The aim of treatment is to remove the water from the now fragile tissue but keep it in an inflated condition. The conservation of Tollund Man in 1950 was one of the earliest successful cases: the water was displaced by soaking in a series of solvents until paraffin was reached in which beeswax would dissolve. Over a matter of six months the wax slowly entered the tissue so that, when the solvents were finally allowed to evaporate off, the solidifying wax held the tissue in place. Only the head of Tollund Man was treated and this you can see in Silkeborg Museum in Denmark – for a number of reasons the body was not conserved and thus a replica was created for display.

Since the 1950s, conservation treatments have developed and now a water-soluble synthetic wax, polyethylene glycol (PEG)\* is introduced, with the remaining water being removed in a freeze dryer thus eliminating the hazard of the retreating water causing the tissue to collapse on its removal. For large finds such as the Mary Rose in Portsmouth, the PEG solution must be sprayed on over years and the water allowed to leave slowly as the humidity is lowered, again over years. In all cases, once treated with PEG, the humidity around the find has to be carefully controlled or else irreparable shrinkage can result. Discussion continues around the ethical dilemma of displaying bodies in museums but, to date, rather than travelling to Denmark, you can see one of our own Iron Age/Romano-British ancestors, Lindow Man, preserved in this way in the British Museum. But he in no way has the wonderful “wise and gentle” expression of Tollund man which so moved Anne Youngson.

**Janey Cronyn (Mrs J M Stevens)**

*\* PEG is also used as a moisturiser in skin cream*



Downloaded from: <http://nautil.us/issue/27/dark-matter/the-curious-case-of-the-bog-bodies>

**Editor's Note:** The possible resemblance to Otmoor made me ask Janey if there might therefore be bodies in Otmoor. Her reply was: “From a quick trawl of the web, I think the chances of finding a body or indeed any organic artefacts on Otmoor are zilch - a publication 'Management of the Otmoor Protected Area (Oxfordshire) (NR0112) says of Otmoor: “Peat has [ ] been lost through wastage (drying out and oxidation) as a result of agricultural activities, particularly drainage and cultivation. So any archaeological organic matter would have dried out and been destroyed.”

## **NEXT MEETING OF THE BOOK GROUP**

Our next book group will remain outside weather permitting and is at 4.00 pm 4 September in Susy Jepson's garden. The books are: “Samuel Pepys: The Unequalled Self” by Claire Tomalin and any of the Donna Leon whodunnit series set in Venice.

Best wishes for the summer and hope the weather stays nice for us!

**Helen Stradling and Lyn Croft** [helen.m-cbeath@doctors.org.uk](mailto:helen.m-cbeath@doctors.org.uk)

## **NEIGHBOURS OLD AND NEW**

The housing market has indeed opened up in Beckley. Long-time residents Peter and Julie Ross are off to Surrey; John and Dee Hazell to nearby Stanton St John We will miss John at Table Tennis, Art Group, and walks. Dee has contributed much to our history. New people will be moving in. Do introduce yourself and our community!.

## BECKLEY & AREA COMMUNITY BENEFIT SOCIETY

The Abingdon Arms is open again, serving meals and drinks every day, with necessary distancing and hygiene measures in place. Take-aways are available lunchtimes and evenings, and a wood-fired pizza oven is being installed! See menus at <https://www.theabingdonarms.co.uk/menus>

### BACBS GOOD NEIGHBOUR SCHEME

The GNS is still up and running!

Now that the Covid lockdown is easing and people are able to get about a bit more, it is likely that lifts will be needed again to Islip Surgery, Headington roundabout etc, but please note that it will be up to the passenger to accept the risks inherent in travelling in close proximity to someone outside the passenger's "bubble". To request a lift either ring **07514 791910** (if there is no reply, please leave a message with your number and one of the drivers will call you back), or email **BACBS-goodneighbour@gmail.com**.

Passengers are asked to pay a mileage charge (45p per mile, rounded to nearest 50p) to cover fuel expenses. The driver will wear a mask and car windows will be opened; and, unless there are medical reasons not to, passengers should wear masks too. ***Please do not ask for a lift if you have any symptoms suggestive of Covid infection, especially a new persistent cough, severely sore throat, loss of smell or taste, high temperature.*** We will check beforehand that both driver and passenger accept these conditions.

In addition, including for people who are quarantined, still shielding or without their own transport, we can deliver take-aways from The Abingdon Arms, prescriptions from Islip surgery, and items from the Stanton Shop if required.

The BACBS GNS serves residents of Beckley, Elsfield, Stanton St John and Forest Hill.

### EVEN MORE THAN A PUB PROGRAMME

Sunday 13 September, 6.30-7.30pm. Talk: ***Does sleep really "knit up the raveled sleeve of care"?*** - *Sleep and its disorders* - John Stradling MD FRCP, Emeritus Professor of Respiratory Medicine, University of Oxford. John lives in Beckley.

Sunday 20 September, 2.30pm. Walk: ***A walk to inspire...*** - A 2 mile walk around Beckley, taking in points of historical, literary and social significance to inspire conversation and, perhaps, poetry.

Sunday 27 September, 6.30-7.30pm. Poetry reading: ***"Going wonderways", In the steps of John Keats: poems about walking*** - Next Step poetry group, Oxford. Participants are invited to read their own poem or a favourite poem by another poet on the broad theme of 'walking'.

Sunday 11 October, 6.30-7.30pm: ***How changes in oxygen levels led to a Nobel Prize in 2019*** - Christopher Pugh, Professor of Renal Medicine at the University of Oxford, Honorary Consultant Physician at Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust, Fellow of Kellogg College, Oxford. Chris lives in Horton cum Studley.

Sunday 8 November: 6.30-7.30pm: ***Owen Barfield of Bee and Church Cottage: the first and last Inklings*** - Owen Barfield, grandson of the first Owen Barfield who lived in Bee and Church Cottage (Church Street, Beckley) for a time in the 1920s. Barfield was a founder of the Inklings, the literary group associated with CS Lewis and JRR Tolkien. His daughter Lucy gave her name to the heroine of Lewis's Narnia books. He was also a noted philosopher in his own right. Today's Owen Barfield will explain some of his grandfather's thinking and why he had such an influence on his fellow Inklings.

Sunday 13 December: 6.30-7.30pm: ***The Secret World of Codes and Ciphers*** - Roger Heath-Brown FRS, Emeritus Professor of Pure Mathematics at Oxford University and Fellow of Magdalen College. Roger lives in Garsington.

All the talks will be on Zoom: see the BACBS website for full details nearer the time - <https://bacbs.org/events>

Most of the past Sunday night Zoom lectures have been recorded and access to each recording can be requested by sending an email to [info@bacbs.org](mailto:info@bacbs.org)."

### **MAPS OF LOCAL ROUTES**

To complement our small folding map, BACBS has produced a booklet of walks in the area which combines outline maps, route notes and points of interest. These are also available on the BACBS website at <https://bacbs.org/local-information>, but the booklet can be carried as you walk! For sale at The Abingdon Arms and in the Stanton St John, Rectory Farm, Field View Farm and Islip shops.

### **BACBS ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING**

BACBS members please note: we are hoping to hold our annual Members Meeting by Zoom on the evening of Wednesday 11 November. Confirmation of the date and more details will follow.

### **RIDE AND STRIDE 12 SEPTEMBER**

This annual sponsored event is the main source of funding for Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust, which gives grants for repairs and improvements to churches and chapels of all denominations in the county. Beckley church received a generous grant in 2010 for the extensive stonework repairs that were needed. 50% of the money you raise can be passed on to a church of your choice, and the remainder is kept by the Trust to enable it to continue to give grants where needed.

Do give it a try! It's not too late to find sponsors and join in. For more information, go to [www.ohct.org.uk/ride-stride](http://www.ohct.org.uk/ride-stride), or contact me. **Gina Robson tel 01865 351637**  
[gina.robson@virgin.net](mailto:gina.robson@virgin.net)

### **BECKLEY COMMUNITY ORCHARD**

The Orchard has been left largely to itself for more than four months. The paths have been mown to maintain the Orchard as a useable community space and it has been a pleasure to see people using the Orchard as a place to visit during lockdown. I have met members and non-members and even complete strangers from outside the village.

The "return to normality" seems to have stalled and we, like other community groups, are left wondering when normal activities can be resumed. We will be canvassing members to find out what measures are required before they can be persuaded to take part in monthly working parties. I suspect that the end of lockdown will be a long drawn out affair with people making their own decisions according to personal circumstances.

There will be a modest crop of apples this year, but honey production has recovered from last year and we will have honey to distribute. We have a lot of work to catch up on: parts of the Orchard are overgrown and we only have three months to prepare for winter. I hope that old friends will return and work together to achieve this. **Matthew Pether (Chairman)**  
[mattpether@btinternet.com](mailto:mattpether@btinternet.com)

### **BECKLEY ART BOX**

We are grateful to John Hazell, who has mounted successive displays of his powerful abstract paintings in the art box over the last few months. John and Dee have recently moved to Stanton St John, but we hope John will contribute to future art displays.

The next display, to be mounted in early September, will be presented by members of the Beckley Art Group. Watch the space! Do YOU have artwork which you would like to show in the art box? If so, please contact [mike.jd.hobbs@gmail.com](mailto:mike.jd.hobbs@gmail.com)

## BECKLEY VILLAGE HALL

The Covid crisis resulted in the closure of our Hall following legislation requiring us to do so. We have worked closely with Community First, the Oxfordshire arm of the national charity ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England), to develop what is considered to be a sensible basis for re-opening following the latest and developing Government guidelines. This has involved the Hall Committee carrying out our own risk assessment; putting in place the associated measures ourselves; providing an addendum to our hire terms to require hirers to take additional measures in relation to the nature of their own planned activities, and ensuring that none of this breaches our insurance terms. We have run pilot hires with trusted hirers to test the procedures and, as a result, we are opening the Hall for general hire from 1 September.

We are aware that we are all going through a learning process in how to deal with this virus and we expect that we shall continue to adapt our procedures and potentially our hire terms in the light of further experience and changes to Government regulations. These measures have increased our costs and dictated a one-hour time gap between paid hires in order to allow for cleaning and to avoid overlap between departing and arriving hirers. However, we have for the moment decided to keep our hire charges unchanged. We would encourage potential hirers to take advantage of what remains a very attractive and award-winning Hall in the knowledge that the Trust has taken great care to seek to ensure a Covid free environment. **Geoff Mills, Chair** [beckleyvillagehall.org](http://beckleyvillagehall.org)

## FUN IN THE SUN CANCELLED

Due to the latest Government guidelines on the opening of village halls we had no option but to cancel the planned sports event on Saturday 11 July. However, families are encouraged to use the playing field to promote a healthy lifestyle. **Dave Drew**

## BECKLEY VILLAGE HALL (as of now)

### MON 10 TABLE TENNIS

[aok50000@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:aok50000@yahoo.co.uk)

TUES 9:15 PILATES [kimbarresi@gmail.com](mailto:kimbarresi@gmail.com)

WED 8:30 CIRCUITS [carl@livingfitness.co.uk](mailto:carl@livingfitness.co.uk)

FRI 9:30 ART GROUP **John Stradling**

[jonathanstradling@hsbc.com](mailto:jonathanstradling@hsbc.com)

### 3RD SAT OXFORD WEAVING GUILD

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** As these activities will be conducted under current rules for public halls, please would all wishing to take part, newcomers or otherwise, contact the email listed before showing up, so proper distancing and numbers can be put in place.

## UPDATE ON CHAIR CIRCUITS

Chair circuits are now available for people needing to stay seated during exercise. See [carl@livingfitness.co.uk](mailto:carl@livingfitness.co.uk) for late Wednesday morning at Islip Village Hall and an on-line session later in the week.

## BECKLEY VILLAGE HALL 150 CLUB WINNERS

### JUNE

1st \*£30 Tom Smith & Suzanne Aigrain

2nd £25 Cash Jan & Fred Weller

3rd £10 Cash Susan Coxhead & Geoff Mills

4th \*£5 Ray Blackler

### JULY

1st \*£35 Mary Ashdown

2nd \*£30 Sharon Lord

3rd £10 Cash Judith Rawlinson

4th £5 Cash Chris Britton

### AUGUST

1st £30 Cash Judith Bushrod

2nd £25 Cash Sue & Chris Cox

3rd £10 Cash Mantina Lopez-Portillo

4th £5 Cash John Baker

\*Vouchers kindly sponsored by The Abingdon Arms. September draw: 7pm on Friday 25th September at The Abingdon Arms.

**Dave Drew 07734911440**

## WILL BUILDING MORE HOUSING RESULT IN AFFORDABLE MORE HOUSING? **Opinion piece**

Some analyses have suggested that a 1% increase in housing stock reduces house prices by about 2% (these are correlations, of course). If you stretch those two figures, in order to reduce local house prices (currently a ratio of prices to wages of about 12:1) to the sort of figure that mortgage companies are happy with (prices to wages of about 4:1) i.e. a reduction of two thirds or 67%, you'd have to increase housing stock by about one third, or 33%, to an additional 100,000 new houses for Oxfordshire. Do you imagine that during the building of all those houses, house prices will fall by 67%? I doubt it. And, if they do, the Govt will have a lot of very unhappy voters on its hands, since they will have seen the value of all existing houses (i.e. their own houses) fall by 67% as well. House prices move in lock-step, and the price of a new house is dictated by the price of all existing houses (of a similar type) already in the area.

Looked at another way, 70% of what you pay for a house today is for the land on which the house sits; 30% is the cost of construction.

So, to reduce the total cost of a house (land plus bricks and mortar) by 67%, i.e. to 33% of current cost, and keeping those construction costs the same, you'd have to buy the land at zero cost. What landowner in Oxfordshire is going to give away building land for nothing? **David Rogers**

## EDITOR'S NOTES

Thank you to all who helped in the production and distribution of the newsletter. You are a talented, caring, generous, and very much appreciated community! Geoff and I have been isolating, but made to feel far from isolated! Now activities are beginning that will lure us out into the community, although not the world that we were once able to explore. The pub, church, village hall, and school are now open under new regulations. Playing field, playground, and tennis courts are open. Walking and cycle trails continue.

If you have time to discuss, wrestle with, and possibly act on matters such as housing, transportation, and protecting the environment, let me know. We are surrounded by very big - and very complicated - issues. But our community has shown over and over that we are up to challenges!

The next issue of the newsletter will be published around the first week end in December, with copy due 20 November.

**Ann Henman, Editor**  
[annhenman@gmail.com](mailto:annhenman@gmail.com)

SCHEMATIC MAP OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT LAND NORTH OF BAYSWATER BROOK

