



Winter 2020 Edition 154

South Leigh News



(Photograph above and top right taken by Liz Ashwell, Photo far right middle taken by Rita Sawrey-Woodwards)

CHRISTMAS SING ALONG ROUND THE TREE AT THE FOOTBALL PITCH – 20TH DECEMBER 5.00PM (COVID Allowing)

We thought we would reinstate this tradition – so please come along if you can. There will be plenty of room at the football pitch to stand well apart if needed. The carols will all be well known – so whether you feel you can sing or not there will be plenty of opportunity to get your lungs working!!

Keith Horner has kindly agreed to play his accordion so it should be fun – more details later as it becomes clear what we are allowed/not allowed to do but put the date in your diary anyway

Keep your eyes peeled for other Christmas surprises – as Heather said – **WE WILL HAVE A CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR!!!**

PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE

We continue to operate via Zoom during these trying times. Anyone is welcome to join the meetings but we ask that you notify us if you wish to speak. There is always a slot for people to raise concerns. The agendas and minutes are published on the village website: www.southleigh.info

The normal practices of the parish council continue with issues of fallen/unsafe trees, potholes and planning applications among others but there are several larger issues to report on. **New Junction at Shores Green** - this is the junction onto the A40 at the Witney end of South Leigh Road, High Cogges.

Currently this junction is only two way - you cannot get off the A40 coming from Burford Direction, only from Oxford - it has long been WODC's plan to update this to a four-way junction. Their justification being that it would encourage local traffic to use the A40 to get to the opposite side of Witney thus reducing traffic congestion and pollution in Bridge Street. Whether we agree with this or not, this junction will be changed along with the extension of the dual carriageway from Barnard Gate to the new Park and Ride at Eynsham.

It is important to us how this junction is placed as we want to prevent any opportunity for more cars to use the village as a cut through. I think we would all agree this happens too much as it is.

Our role is to make sure our views are heard once consultation begins. To that end I have been advised by Oxfordshire County Council that a first round of consultation with stakeholders ie us, will take place at the end of this month.

As your parish council we will be looking at this carefully but will also be looking for your views.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Parish News, Update, Meet Tammy, St James the Great 2	
Vicar's Letter.....	3
Bellringers' Autumn Review	4
Lymbrook Playground Update, Christmas Dinner	5
Solar Farm & Mobile Signal Update, Heather's Garden.6	
Nature Notes - "Ratty's Back!"	7
Nature Notes.....	8
Nature Notes.....	9
Conservation Poll	10
Conservation Poll, Quiz	11
Nature Walk.....	12
Nature Walk Map, Parish Warden Update, Club 100	13
Hogwatch	14
Hogwatch	15
Disclaimer, Quiz Answers, Pumpkin Competition, South Leigh Recipe Update.....	16

The South Leigh News Photograph Requests

South Leigh News would like to publish photos taken by villagers in each edition capturing our Parish.

We won't be able to publish everyone's however we shall choose photos that are best suited to the edition.

A star photo will be selected to go on the front page of the newsletter. Please can you email any photos to :

southleighnewsletter@gmail.com

ST JAMES THE GREAT



This beautiful full colour brochure of the history and artefacts of St. James the Great has been produced by Josh Bromley aged 12 years as a school project. It is A4 size and has 23 pages full of fascinating details about our lovely village church. If you would like to purchase a copy they are being sold for £5 in aid of church funds and are available from Liz Ashwell.

liz@southleigh.info
Lymbourne Chapel Road 01993 703534

WELCOMES & GOODBYES

Mike and Beryl Jones have moved from "Thorns", Station Road into Witney and have been replaced by Craig, Angela and Bernard. Bernard has 4 legs and a tail.

The Crook Family have also moved from 1 Lymbrook Cottages and the new arrivals are Josh and Jenny Bennett and son Riley.

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS CONTINUED

The Lymbrook

Lysette and Graham have been looking into both the health of the Lymbrook as a whole and the flooding issues in particular. Although generally much improved, the village still floods to an extent with heavy rainfall. Lysette has had meetings with all the landowners involved and we hope to see further improvements over this winter.

Graham has been very involved in trying to improve the quality of the Lymbrook itself. He has recently arranged a water quality test and is in talks with both BBOWT and the wildlife/fauna and flora group in Eynsham all of whom have a wealth of experience.

Mobile Phone Signal Improvement

I would like to thank Dick Pears for taking the lead on this project. He is undertaking a huge amount of work. An improved service is an aim of our Neighbourhood Plan and is something that is becoming more and more important in these modern times. (See Page 6)

With COVID 19 still ever present, please remember there are loads of people who are willing and able to help out anyone who is isolating. Please just get in touch with myself or any other councillor. We're here to help.

Keep well and keep safe.

Nicky Brooks

TAMMY HEAVENS - PARISH CLERK, TWO MINUTE INTERVIEW

Tammy has been settling into her role as Parish Clerk and we thought it would be good to introduce her to everyone and find out a little bit more.

How long have you lived in the village and what attracted you to moving here with your family ?

We moved here in 2017, we love the village, we are close to so many wonderful amenities, but It feels as if we are in the middle of nowhere.

What is your favourite walk in the village?

There are so many we love them all.

If you were going to the Mason Arms what drink would you order?

The guest cider or a fruity G&T.

Have you got a special moment you have had whilst living in the village that you can share?

We just love Ray's Christmas bonanza.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

Long walks with our dog, and learning to ride my motorbikes.

What motivated you want to become the Parish Clerk for the village ?

I wanted to be more involved in the village community. And pitch in to help where I can.



A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE VICAR

Who knows what life will be like when you read this! Life in 2020 has been one of constant change and constant uncertainty – along with a good number of nasty surprises. Who would have predicted this year in November 2019? I am writing in early November 2020 as Lockdown 2.0 is in its early days, but there is also a silver lining to the cloud as we are hearing news of a possible vaccine for COVID-19.

We are approaching Christmas in a year when most of us feel fed up and exhausted and anxious about what the long winter might involve. The coming months might seem like an uphill struggle we don't want to face. The Christmas message of the baby Jesus, the light in the darkness which the darkness can never extinguish has never been more needed.

In the run up to Christmas this year I have been thinking a lot about Mary the mother of Jesus. The first Christmas, like us, she had to walk a path that she wouldn't have wanted to face. God called her, through the angel Gabriel, to be the mother of his Son, Jesus. But for Mary, this miraculous baby would mean bearing a child as an unmarried teenager in a society where that would have provoked raised eyebrows, questions... and worse. She had a massive amount of courage to say those famous words: 'I am the Lord's servant... May your word to me be fulfilled.'

Mary, though, did not face this challenge alone. Gabriel when announcing that she was to bear the baby Jesus, said to her: 'The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.' Mary had a seriously big and tough calling to face, but she did not face it alone. God would be with her. The Spirit of God inside her and the power of God outside of her. This was Gabriel's explanation of how Mary was going to bear God's Son, but it would also have been a great encouragement as she faced the unfaceable before her – God was there with her.

Indeed, Mary had the privilege of taking a part in God's plan to not just be with Mary, but to be with all his people. One of the other titles which this baby Jesus would have is 'Emmanuel' which means "God with us". God wanted to be with us his people. In Jesus, God came to dwell as a human among humans. And through his life, and particularly his death, Jesus' mission was to make God's presence possible for everyone. The way God was with Mary was a one off, but Jesus' life and death made it possible for God to be with anyone and everyone by his Spirit, if they put their faith in Jesus and receive his forgiveness.

So, this Christmas, as we face the seemingly unfaceable, God offers us the gift of being with us. Being with us as we face the storms of this winter and of whatever the future may hold. That was what that first Christmas was all about – God with us.

I am not sure how we will be able to celebrate Christmas as a church at St. James' or even in our own homes. Will we be able to see our families and friends? But the church building does remain (as I write!) open daily for private prayer. So, I invite you to pop in and spend some time through prayer to invite God to be with you this Christmas.





ST. JAMES THE GREAT BELLRINGERS' AUTUMN REVIEW

EVADNE ADRIAN-VALLANCE

The bells at St. James' fell silent in March as the first lockdown began and ringing as well as church services had to be suspended, but there have nonetheless been plenty of industrious bell ringing and Tower related activities going on during this time.

As Tower Captain, Heather Horner had the demanding task of drafting first a risk assessment for post-lockdown ringing at St. James' and then a comprehensive set of COVID-19 precautions as required by the Central Council of Church Bellringers in agreement with the Church of England and Public Health England. These were necessary before a cautious return to ringing could be allowed. Besides the usual face mask use, sanitising and ventilation, the precautions involve many further detailed safety measures. Most importantly, only certain combinations of our eight bells can be rung together in order to meet the requirements that ringers must be 2 metres apart from each other when facing, and 1.5 metres apart when sideways. Our steeple keeper, Martin Spurrier, kindly provided a to-scale plan of the ringing room, which ascertained that in our small space only three bells may be rung at a time.

Once these arrangements were in place, the bells required a full inspection after six months of non-use, and we are most grateful to Martin for carrying this out efficiently.

In September, the Vicar invited us to ring again once a month for the Sunday service. You may have heard two or three bells ringing for fifteen minutes, which is the maximum length of ringing time allowed by the

COVID-19 guidelines. People have commented how nice it is to hear them again, 'like normal times'. Sadly, in November, ringing has come to a further halt. Also sadly, in October we said farewell to Chris Moxon from Cogges, a highly experienced ringer who has supported our band tirelessly for the past two years and acted as Ringing-master. Chris has returned to his native Yorkshire to live nearer to his family.

On Remembrance Sunday, the Associate Vicar David Spence led a short service with no socialising in the churchyard at the front of the church and we obtained permission to toll one bell to follow the two-minute silence. A number of parishioners gathered, standing in isolation away from each other but in strong community spirit, to hear the roll call and prayers and to see laid out on the war memorial the 23 crosses and poppies for the men from this village who lost their lives.

Although practice ringing in the tower has not been possible, there is a virtual answer to this which has proved extremely popular with ringers across the world during this time. We can meet in online Ringing Rooms, and while pressing the space bar to ring your bell is not quite the same as bell handling, it is possible to make great strides in learning methods (patterns of ringing) and improving understanding of bell ringing theory. This is a good way to keep in touch with familiar faces and, as you can practise with ringers anywhere, we are delighted to welcome Chris back from distant Yorkshire to our online Ringing Room.

LYMBROOK PLAYGROUND GETS NEW EQUIPMENT— ASSISTANCE REQUIRED

I'm delighted to announce that two new pieces of playground equipment were installed in the playground in October.

We received a generous donation of £1000 from the Co-op and £250 from Witney Lions Dream Scheme along with donations from summer fayre funds and a donation given to the Parish Council for village causes. It has been great to have support for the playground from all these sources. I hope the children will get many years of enjoyment out of the new climbing frame and monkey bars.

The equipment was chosen by a group of village children in the Spring. The safety surfacing under the equipment is grasslok safety tiles and the grass is already growing through the tiles. The area underneath the new equipment will soon be green. Fingers crossed it won't be too hard to mow !

Our next project is to find funds for a new waste bin and to renew the Springie tops which have been renovated a couple of times over their lives but now would benefit from replacement.

Once COVID-19 pandemic is over it would be brilliant if we could organise another working party to lift, clean and re-lay the safety surfacing under the flat swings. This will need quite a few people to help as each tile will be heavy and cumbersome to move. A weekend of work will save thousands of pounds if we had to get a company in to do this for us.

Karen Wilson



CHRISTMAS DINNER— CAN YOU COOK ONE EXTRA MEAL ?

The pandemic has shown that as a village we can support our neighbours and with Christmas fast approaching we still don't know whether we will be able to see family or friends during this period.

The village community to date has worked together to ensure that individuals, families and couples don't feel isolated when we have had lockdowns and made sure everyone has had a contact in the village to assist them when isolating ranging from picking up food and prescriptions to setting up the well used bus shelter exchange to a fabulous scarecrow competition, allowing social distanced interaction.

Christmas can be a very difficult time and for many who may not be able to see friends or family, who are isolating or single and don't relish the idea of cooking for one and we are hoping that we can bring some Christmas cheer.

It would be lovely if some volunteers could offer to cook one or two extra Christmas Dinners this year for those parishioners in the village that may like to have a dinner delivered on Christmas Day at an arranged time so that it can be left outside – social distancing observed.

Please can you email me if you would be interested in cooking an extra meal so that I can coordinate.
Lysette at newsletter@southleigh.info

Mobile Phone Update

A meeting was held with Robert Courts M.P. who has now opened a survey on his

Facebook page allowing you to tell him your experiences with mobile signals in the area. **I urge you to complete it asap.** I did not suggest the further political questions! But he has asked for your opinion so he can't complain if you give them.

Please find below the link:

www.robertcourts.co.uk/mobilesurvey

He has also recorded in South Leigh a short video to accompany the survey.

There will be a further article in the Witney Gazette about the issue.

Nicky Brooks and I are having a further meeting with him on 19th March.

In the meantime he has sent four letters to each of the four major mobile providers and there is a video conference with Vodafone on 27th November - I am sending him some briefing notes.

There is some progress but Vodafone and O2 are being intransigent and he and I have to do more work with them.

It is a case of plugging away.

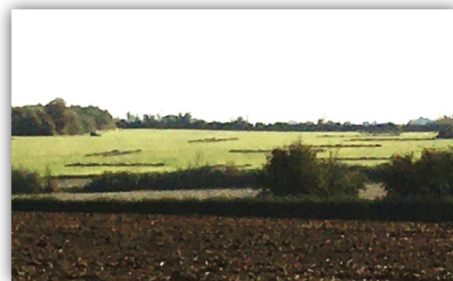
Dick Pears

THE AURORA SOLAR FARM

If you were wondering what the excavation work on the solar farm site was recently, well, yes, they were digging for treasure.

As part of the developer's planning conditions, they were required to conduct an archaeological survey and that is what we saw.

The upshot was that they did find traces of what seems to have been an early Roman farm on the high ground at the northern end. The evidence is currently being documented in a report to go to the County Archaeologist very shortly and it is expected that findings of interest would be put on public display in due course. More news is expected for the next Newsletter. According to James Hartley-Bond, the Project Management Consultant at developer, Low Carbon, "The project at 12-Acre Farm is progressing



Distant picture taken from Bond's Lane, 28th September Above

well and construction should start in the spring and we hope that electricity will be flowing to consumers by mid summer".

The 57-hectare (140 acre) aurora solar farm has a 40-years lease after which it will be decommissioned and the land returned to its former use. It is estimated to produce enough power for 9,900 homes.

MS



Heather's Garden



**We ARE going to have a Christmas this year!
Come and choose a treat! Or the perfect gift!**

**Unique selection of home-made jams, jellies and marmalades
Special seasonal jars of fruit**

Unusual vinegars

**Made with my own home grown fruit No spraying No preservatives
Local Honey**

**From the bees in my garden (and yours),
or from nearby Cogges Manor Farm, different flowers = different taste**

**Display on verge outside Windrush Cottage when fine,
but always available in the porch if cold or wet, and after dark (no need to knock).**

Not sure about jellies?

Jellies are made like jams but just the juice is used. All the flavour, none of the seeds! As well as spreading on bread or toast like jam, jellies go well with cheese, or on ice cream, or on your porridge. Try a spoonful in your casserole for a subtle fruity flavour.

Heather Horner
Windrush Cottage
Station Road
Telephone 01993 357389
South Leigh OX29 6XN
e-mail hahwindrush@aol.com



NATURE NOTES by Martin Spurrier

*'The mighty oak from an acorn towers;
A tiny seed can fill a field with flowers'* *Winston Churchill*

Following Winston Churchill's lead, above, here is an update on the South Leigh Forest Restoration work and our wildflower initiative... plus news on of the return of 'Ratty'!

Trees: By the time you read this Newsletter, we hope to have planted our first 11 trees along Chapel Road (*Below: 3 oaks, 2 wild cherry, 3 beech, and 3 hornbeam*). Watch the village website for news.

Having received consent from Eynsham Park Estate and having all the legal documentation in place, on 14th October, David, Graham and Martin cranked up the auger and got digging the 11 holes along the Chapel Road hedge line, north side. We were ably supported by Jackie's *Meals on Wheels* and her coffee and bikkies saved the day.

Next steps: We have applied to the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) for a small grant that will see us through the next plantings at the Football Field, by Just Cartridges' drive (again, thanks to Eynsham Park), and in Stanton Harcourt Road opposite Warners Farm, thanks to Mr. and Mrs. David Bury. These will add up to about 30 more trees to make our total for the year about 80.

Securing planting sites has proven a very slow exercise this year. This has been, partly, because new government agricultural legislation is imminent and, understandably, land owners want to see what the rules will say before committing land to us. We keep our fingers crossed that it will be favourable to tree planting in the new year.



Wildflowers: Graham reports that the village has made good progress with wildflower planting in 2020.

Several private gardens now have their wildflower areas, and a number of verges have been planted in small areas by hard working village volunteers.

In a move to promote further self setting, we cut the verges where it was possible in Chapel Road at Margery Cross (*middle right*) where the wildflowers have taken well, and several folk turned out later to rake over the cut grass.

Thank you.

Next year they should be even better and we shall see the results of this year's work to bring more wildflower beauty to the village and with it, we hope, more butterflies, bees, and bugs! In the meantime, we are liaising closely with friends in Eynsham on green matters and are exchanging information and advice.



Above: Wild and not so wild, but lovely, nevertheless! (How ever did the sunflowers survive the gales?)



Big News – 'Ratty' is back

Water voles spotted in the Limb Brook!

Graham has seen water voles in the stream in Chapel Road! This is big news because according to The Wildlife Trusts, the water vole, who is the much-loved British mammal known as 'Ratty' in The Wind in the Willows.

Water voles are a vital part of the river ecosystem. Their burrowing, feeding and movement help to create conditions for other animals and plants to thrive - a bit like beavers do, but on a much smaller scale. The Wildlife Trusts and many other organizations are working hard to keep water voles in our rivers and streams and to restore them to places where they have been in the past. If you see one, please can you tell Graham who is monitoring the situation (07932 172873).

The water vole has chestnut-brown fur, a blunt, rounded nose, small ears, and a furry tail. ...

The similar brown rat is larger, with grey-brown fur, a pointed nose, large ears that protrude from its fur, and a long, scaly tail.



A water vole's vital statistics: are Tail: 9.5-14cm
Length: 14-22cm (The Wildlife Trusts)

PS: BBOWT (The Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust) has just carried out a survey of the water voles in the Lymbrook. We expect the results to be passed on to the village in the next few weeks.

Martin Spurrier

CRAYFISH ALERT!

We see delicious crayfish ravioli and crispy crayfish patties on tempting menus, but the aggressive 'signal' crayfish is causing huge damage to our river banks, including the Windrush. They are also destroying our native white-clawed variety.

I know of one sighting in the Lymbrook, but the variety was not confirmed, so I would ask readers for other reports if you see them. Please note the identifying features, opposite, and then we can check if we have a problem, as well as dinner.



Signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*) were introduced into the UK by the British Government in the 1970s, intended to be farmed for food, but some escaped (of course!) and they then breed like wild fire across our river network. There, they started eliminating our native variety and destroying our river banks.

Identification features of signal crayfish include: *Red underside to claws *There is a prominent white or bluish patch on each claw at the top of the finger joint - the 'signal' patch. *Upper surface is a greenish brown *Lower surface is an orange/red *Smooth ridge running along the middle of the rostrum (its beak/'nose-like thing'). They can grow up to 16-18 centimetres in size.

In contrast, our native white-clawed crayfish is: * brown to olive colour *the underside of the claws are usually white, not red, it is smaller growing to a maximum of 12 centimetres.

Signal crayfish have caused environmental and economic problems. They carry the crayfish plague, which is fatal to the native white-clawed crayfish. They create a network of tunnels that can go up to 2 metres into river banks. These cause collapses and flooding, plus a silt load in the water. They can also reduce fish stocks.

If you see one please let me know. Martinspurrier@hotmail.com



NATURE NOTES

Bumper Berries on Bond's Lane

What a year for berries on our hedgerows! My sloe brandy for next year is looking delicious. It's not too late to make some, by the way. In fact, the fruit is now perfect as many have split in the brief frost.

Apparently, the absence of late frost last winter combined with a mild spring, warm summer and no drought have given us the 2020 bumper harvest that we are still seeing. Limbs full of sloes on Bond's Lane broke under the burden and Hawthorn and Golden Hornet crab apple (I think?) were not far behind. The blackberries were a major attraction.

Do you remember your school-days' poetry? Undoubtedly, one of the best-known first lines ever must be, "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness". John Keats rattled off Ode to Autumn nearly 200 years ago after a country walk to avoid hearing his neighbour's daughter practising her violin. Here are the first 11 of his 33 lines:

*Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.*



Spindle, and crab apple and rose hips. Above: Sloes, blackberries, sloe brandy making and hawthorn.

We are hoping that the sloes will still be on the hedges after we go to 'press'. If so, below are some ideas from the BBC:

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/sloe-recipes>

MS: martinspurrier@hotmail.com 07799368464

Nature snips



Next summer, don't worry too much about countless Daddy Long-Legs (or crane flies) visiting you like this one on my front door. It's because they love the bright lights. They are completely harmless and are an important source of food for birds. Plus, they only live 10 to 15 days! Above



Left:
Footpath
widening
on the
railway
line. Below
in Bond's
Lane



Left: The
trees fall
at the
Church

South Leigh and High Cogges Conservation Area Bid

Residents' Information Note No. 2

Upcoming Request to Poll

From the Working Group

November 2020

'Preserve or Enhance'

The Parish Council will soon ask us to poll on whether we agree, disagree, or remain uncommitted to a proposal that the Conservation Area Working Group should prepare a draft application for Conservation Area (CA) status (with options, e.g. boundaries etc.) covering areas of the Parish of South Leigh including High Cogges. This would be for consideration by the Parish Council and Parish residents and, in due course, voted on by residents. This note provides background from the Working Group, and our position on it.

The West Oxon. government defines CAs as: *'Conservation areas are places of special architectural or historic interest, which have a particular character or appearance worth preserving or enhancing. Groups of buildings, walls, trees and hedges, open spaces, views and the historic settlement patterns all combine to create an individual sense of place. It is this character, rather than individual buildings, that a conservation area seeks to protect.'* <https://bit.ly/WODC-Conservation-area-maps>

But why a Conservation Area when we already have a Neighbourhood Plan?

Here is our view, short and sweet. There is much more below:

They are different but complementary. They both protect us, but in different ways. In a nutshell, the Neighbourhood Plan is largely about buildings, infrastructure and their shape and size, but it will do little to protect the *'character'* or *'personality'* of our Parish. That is the job of the CA, if we qualify. You could say that the NP addresses the *where*, *what* and the *quantity* of new development, while the CA protects the *special character*, *unique rural personality* and the *quality* of everything within its boundaries. The NP has a renewable life; a CA is permanent.

Some Pros and Cons.

Pros:

It is hard to articulate all the positive elements that make up what we call *'the South Leigh and High Cogges we love'* because many of the benefits are the 'soft' things that we may even take for granted - like our dark skies, narrow lanes, hedges and trees, our peaceful views and ancient landscape, our birds, hedgehogs and bugs. Plus, it's also about the 'look' of our buildings and the 'feel' of the village. And apart from what *is* here, it would protect us from what *isn't*. Like ugly or 'out of keeping' buildings, urban street furniture, unnecessary concrete curb stones, hard surfaces, road markings, signage and street lighting.

The things that 'are' present and those that 'aren't' combine to create the feeling of 'place' and 'community', and it is they that underpin the sheer pleasure we get from living among our familiar surroundings – and knowing that this *'personality'* will be preserved.

And, as an incidental benefit, research shows that property here will almost certainly increase in value (by an average of 9%), and increase faster than average. This shows that there is a demand to live in a CA. Why? Because those who do live in one value it.

See <https://bit.ly/LSE-value-assessment>

The Working Group is in favour of a CA but, to present both sides fairly, the list of Cons, below, is in more detail. We also ask residents to read the links we have given, and others, to be informed as to both sides:

Cons:

Residential development: A CA does not stop development, but it does require some additional permissions. Planning applications for development must demonstrate how the proposals would 'preserve or enhance' the *character* of the area. Here are examples that may require planning permission that, currently, would not: *Extensions to the side of a property. *Two-storey extensions to the rear of a property. *External cladding. *Alterations to roofs for the enlargement of a property. *Windows and doors, in some limited circumstances. *Satellite dishes, antennae, chimneys, flues and other elements added to, and protruding from walls or roof slopes fronting the highway or forming the main or side elevation. *The erection of some additional structures within the grounds of a property.

Biodiversity: Protected species and habitats need to be addressed carefully in planning.

Trees: Owners planning to lop, top or fell a larger tree must give notice.

All trees in conservation areas are protected if they have a stem diameter of 7.5 centimetres measured at 1.5 metres from ground level.

Restrictions on outdoor advertisements: Certain categories of advertisements are restricted.

Demolitions: An additional application will usually be needed for volumes exceeding 115m³

New development: This is managed to ensure that the natural process of renewal and change '*preserves or enhances*' the best of the past but allows for sympathetic new development. However, a CA does not *stop* development but rather it is intended to ensure that any potential changes will be managed in a way that '*preserves or enhances*' the special qualities of the Conservation Area. See <https://bit.ly/WODCdesign-guide-6>

Repairs and maintenance: Owners of buildings are encouraged to repair and maintain their properties without loss or damage to their character or integrity.

Designation or alteration of conservation areas: Consultation is an important part of the designation process. Local opinion is sought prior to the designation or alteration of conservation areas.

Some background for your information

Britain has 10,000 Conservation Areas. West Oxfordshire has 51. Please see the above link for maps of each.

2016: South Leigh and High Cogges: 6th October 2016, a public meeting in the village hall (35 present) agreed in principle to look into applying for Conservation Area (CA) status 94% in favour and 6% uncommitted. It did not progress because the District Council's then Conservation Officer was too busy!

2020: 29th January 2020, another public meeting. It was chaired by a non-partisan member of the village. Four members of the PC attended. A show of hands was 82% in favour with 18% against.

CA: This has been on the Parish Council meeting agenda in January, February, March and October.

7th September: 'Residents' Information Note No. 1' circulated. The Note was distributed informally round the village and has been on the village website for some time at <https://southleigh.info/conservation-area>.

16th September: A public meeting could not proceed because of Covid-19. Instead, the Working Group carried out a straw poll to update the PC. 89 people polled, 73% in favour, 12% against, 4% uncommitted.

19th November 2020: Another briefing note was prepared for the Parish Council Meeting. The PC endorsed a more inclusive poll to gauge the sentiment of Parish residents.

Please watch out for the Request to Poll from the Parish Council. As the Working Group, we urge you to support the proposal and help 'preserve or enhance' the things we love about South Leigh and High Cogges.

Thank you - please do not hesitate to contact us, The Conservation Area Working Group
Gary: 07920 771897 Dick: 07850 175729 Martin: 07799 368464

nichollsgary@hotmail.com

dpea4cs@aol.com

martinspurrier@hotmail.com

QUIZ

A QUIZ FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON

Insert the missing vowels to solve these sequences of words that appear in the named carols. The spaces are not relevant, e.g. the words "good luck" could appear as GDL CK or G DLC K.

So, GD LCK! Answers appear elsewhere in this issue.

1 S TRS TR FWN DRS TRF (We Three Kings)

2 HWS TL LWS THL (O Little Town of Bethlehem)

3 NRY LDV DSCT YSTD (Once in Royal David's City)

4 H LL YF LLLL LLLL TS (Deck the Halls)

5 HMB RNTHK NG FNGLS (O Come all ye Faithful)

6 STD L WLYC TTLS HD (Once in Royal David's City)

7 FSTP HNWH NTHS NWLY (Good King Wenceslas)

8 THVRB LSSD MRNHL (See, Amid the Winter's Snow)

9 MRN NGND WHTW SN THSSH PS (I Saw Three Ships)

10 MT HRMLDJS SCHR STHR (Once in Royal David's City)

11 S TRWT HRY LBTYBR GH TWSTW RD (We Three Kings)

12 FTHD RTHP LYN GFTH (The Holly and the Ivy)

13 NGLD DSYWSTC RTNPR (The First Nowell)

14 LDDW NHS SWTHDT HST RS (Away in a Manger)

15 JYHT DNG SFCMF RTND (God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen)

16 RCNC LDJY FLLL YNT NS (Hark! The Herald-Angels Sing)

17 WTHH RTNDS LN DVC (Good Christian Men, Rejoice)

18 NDTRM PHNTC MYCMY (O Come, All Ye Faithful)

19 SHL TRW SSTB LNDHS (Once in Royal David's City)

20 NDPR TRD GNP RTR (Twelve Days of Christmas)

QUIET LANES AROUND COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY, WITH

WATER MEADOWS by Russell & Anne Cherry

A choice of several walks (returning same route) on quiet country lanes around 3 hamlets, giving the opportunity to stretch the legs when fieldpaths are sodden! Excellent for cycling too!

Park at point A on map, on L by allotments along lane to Cote, a short way from B4449 near Aston. Use Chimney Meadows Nature Reserve Car Park (point B on Map) for walks (iv) & (v) only. These 2 walks are also incorporated in the longer walks (ii) & (iii). **N.B.** This car park was closed during the Spring 2020 lockdown (open since), so may be closed again in the event of any further lockdown/restrictions. Also, dogs must be kept on leads from point B through Chimney Meadows due to sensitivity of the Nature Reserve—this applies to walks (iii) & (v).

It is recommended you avoid walking along the busy B4449.

WALKS FROM COTE (POINT A)

(I) TO SHIFFORD CHAPEL (3 miles return) & BEYOND TO 'NEW COTTAGES' (3 ¾ miles return).

Go along lane through Cote. Note the fine former Baptist chapel soon seen on R—a Grade II listed building from mid C18, now disused (well worth visiting when open on occasions for events).

Continue through Cote & go straight ahead at junction with lane off to R. You soon reach the fine Cote House on R, mostly C16 & C17, possibly built on site of a medieval house. Carry on along lane for a further mile to reach Shifford chapel on R in its fine setting, with the meadows below leading off to the Thames (often masses of cowslips down there in Spring). This chapel was rebuilt in the C19 on the site of a C13 chapel, & is a Grade II listed building. The chapel is usually locked, but there is a well-placed seat here.

Shifford grew near a ford across the Thames and so gets its name from “sheep ford”.

For the slightly longer walk continue on lane which bends L to 'New Cottages', then turn back.

(ii) TO GREAT BROOK & BEYOND (4 ½ miles return).

Firstly, refer to 1st para under walk (i) for information. Then continue through Cote & go R at junction, then L at next junction. When reach next junction at bridge over brook (Great Brook) go R along this pleasant lane, which joins the busy & fast Bampton to Buckland road—so turn around before reaching it!

(iii) TO THE THAMES PATH, CHIMNEY MEADOWS (4 ½ miles return), WITH OPTION TO EXTEND WALK BY INCORPORATING WALK (II) (7 miles return).

Firstly, refer to 1st para under walk (i) for information. Then continue through Cote & go R at junction, then L at next junction to cross wide brook (Great Brook) at next junction. Now go straight ahead, then lane bends sharp L with Chimney Meadows Nature Reserve car park round on L (point B on map).

Continue along lane beyond car park to go sharp R then reach house on L. Go L here, through gate, & continue through the meadows, which form part of the floodplain of the River Thames. Lots of cowslips are seen here in Spring, & there is also access to 2 hides (closed when lockdown restrictions in force). Bear round to R to reach bridge at the Thames Path. This is Shifford Lock Cut, constructed end C19 to bypass a very meandering section of the Thames, & hence improve navigation. Now retrace your steps.

If you plan to extend the walk, then when reach junction by Great Brook go L, & turn back before reaching the busy & fast Bampton to Buckland road.

WALKS FROM CHIMNEY MEADOWS NATURE RESERVE CAR PARK (POINT B)



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chimney_Meadows#/media/File:Chimney_Meadows.jpg

(iv) TO GREAT BROOK & BEYOND (miles return)

Go R along lane from car park & at junction by wide brook (Great Brook) go L, & retrace your steps before reaching the Bampton -Buckland road.

(v) TO THAMES PATH, CHIMNEY MEADOWS (2 miles return)

Follow route as described in para 2 under walk (iii) above.

RC

Update From The Parish Wardens

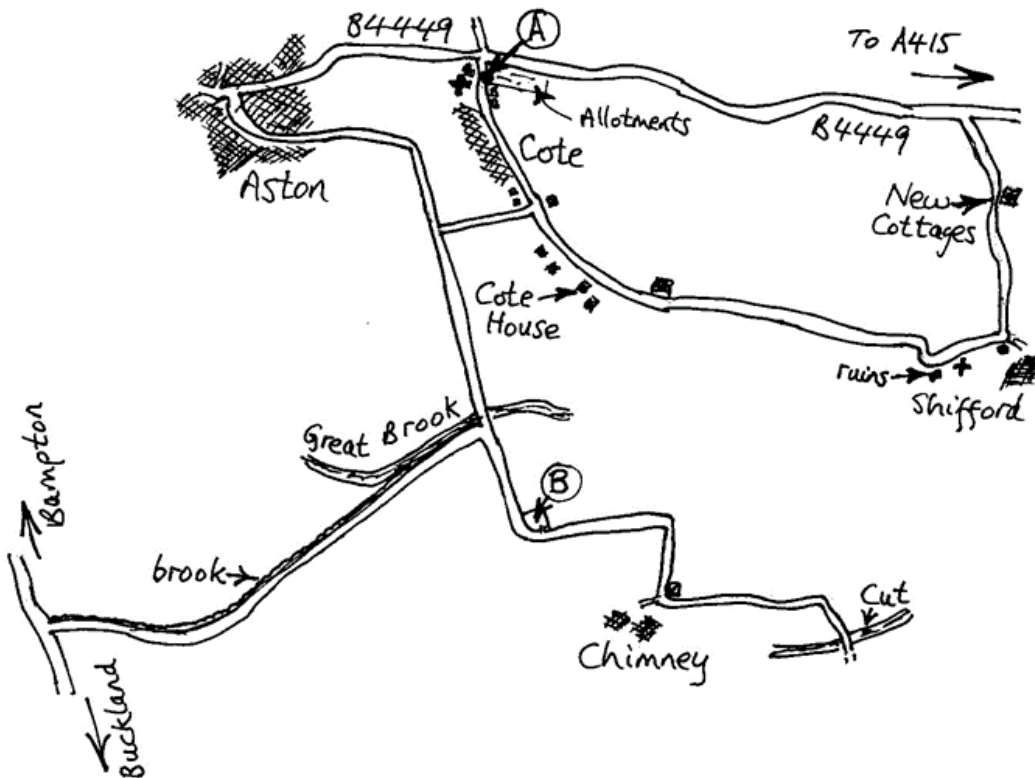
We are told that there are at present around 4000 unresolved issues regarding problems on the Public Rights of Way network in Oxfordshire! With this workload the Countryside Access Team will understandably prioritise issues. We keep adding to the list, and whilst issues such as the unsafe stile behind Homans Farm and no replacement footbridge at start of Restricted Byway to Bond's Lane from Barnard Gate Road remain unresolved, the latest matters reported are as follows.

The stile by Gunn Cottage has a wobbly step and rotten supports, and on the footpath bearing to right beyond the cottage there is a stile with a broken step and another stile with a wobbly step and rotten supports. Also, the stile in hedge at top of field above Homans Farm on footpath to Church End has a wobbly step. These stiles are all unsafe, so take great care if using these routes. These issues have been reported, and we also bring such problems to the attention of the Parish Council in the hope that their approach to the relevant landowner brings a quicker resolution.

Before we get to winter 'proper' (?) the fields in our parish are very sodden, so take care when out and about.

Anne & Russell Cherry

QUIET LANES AROUND COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY, WITH WATER MEADOWS MAP



Village Hall

Village Hall Committee

Richard Law (Chair)
773355

Dorothy Carden – Noad (Secretary)
703840

John Ashwell (Treasurer)
703534

Debi Deacon (Bookings)
773314

David Brown
703765

Sue Washington
775574

Caroline Auger
834899

VILLAGE HALL 100 CLUB

**THE VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE
WILL CONTINUE THIS FOR
ANOTHER 12 MONTHS.**

**ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION WILL
REMAIN AT ONLY £12.00 per
person**

**THE FIRST PRIZE DRAW OF 2021
WILL BE MADE AT THE END OF
JANUARY.**

**AS SOON AS THE MONTHLY SO-
CIAL EVENINGS ARE ALLOWED TO
RESUME ON THE LAST FRIDAY OF
EACH**

**MONTH THE DRAW WILL TAKE
PLACE THEN.**

**THE MORE PEOPLE WHO JOIN,
THE HIGHER WILL BE THE PRIZE
MONEY**

**PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR VILLAGE
HALL**

by making a BACS transfer to SLVH
account at Lloyds Bank, Witney 30 99
78, 00178826 or send a cheque paya-
ble to SLVH to John Ashwell, Lym-
bourne, Chapel Road. Thank you.

The names of the monthly winners are
always shown in this magazine and on
the village website.

THANK YOU.

Club 100 Winners

Aug Liz Ashwell and David Brooks

Sept Quentin Murphy & David
Brooks

Oct Anne Cherry and Greg
Murphy



HOGWATCH 2020



2020 has been a very strange and unusual year. We all have had to adapt and change our normal daily routines. But not for Hedgehogs. They have been going about their daily routines as if nothing has changed. Well it hasn't for them.

As with every year, they come out of hibernation, find food and water and find somewhere dry, warm and safe to bring up the children. If you were a Hedgehog, where in South Leigh would be the prime position to live and raise the kids?

Well, looking at our local Hogs and where the greatest numbers were seen, they prefer to live in and around Chapel Road.

It all started in April with Hogs now out of hibernation and wanting their breakfast, in the evening of course. Most Hogs were seen along Chapel road. Several of them enjoy living in this part of the village and why not, there's fabulous living accommodation, plenty of grassland perfect for feeding, hedgerows and coppices for finding prey and sleeping in. They even have easy access into and between the gardens of Chapel Road. Not only that, they also get fed by some of their human neighbours. They've got it made.

So wonderful are these gardens along Chapel Road, one female, known locally as 'Hetty' decided that she wanted to set up a home for her and her children to grow up in this part of the neighbourhood. She liked the look of John and Liz Ashwell's garden, so she decided to build a nest under some shrubs. The garden also provided 'Hetty' with nesting material. John, Liz and myself had much enjoyment watching 'Hetty' appear from the shrubs, collect dead Daffodil leaves and take them back under the shrubs to build a nest in preparations for her hoglets. Of course, John and Liz saw more of her than I or anyone else did.

Although Hetty was seen many times leaving her nest and going on a foraging trip in the evenings, any youngsters that she may have given birth to were never seen leaving the nest with her. It is possible that if she had given birth to them she may have only brought them out when it was late and dark and no-one was watching.

Next door to John and Liz is the home of Ally Urquhart. Ally always puts food out for the Hedgehogs and she had several hogs visiting, how could they and Hetty resist the best restaurant in the neighbourhood?

Amongst these hogs there were some youngsters which could possibly have been Hetty's but we can never be sure.

To get an idea as to how many Hedgehogs were in the area around Chapel Road, Ally painted a different colour spot of nail varnish on many of them. Hetty was easy to identify because as she walked, she swung one of her back legs out. Ally estimates that there were at least 6 hogs, and maybe as many as 8 in high summer. It wasn't easy to count them, especially when it was dark. This is a fabulous number for this area and for any area in any village.

In my own garden I put out Hedgehog food in a feed station from early spring hoping to attract a Hog or maybe provide food for one that may have hibernated within my ex orchard now a wildlife sanctuary, over the winter. But alas, no. I looked all Spring and Summer, I even checked after dark hoping and wishing that I may see one. By the end of Summer I was giving up hope, but then in early Autumn I saw that the Hog food was being eaten overnight, I then saw telltale droppings of Hedgehogs. Wow, I felt excited and relieved that I finally had a Hog in my garden.

During the Summer I put out a new hibernation box that I recently built, I put it under an Oak tree which is quite near to the feed station. I like to think that the Hog is using it, I don't know as I daren't look as I don't want to disturb it if it's in there.

As I said, there have been several Hogs along Chapel Road which goes to prove just how good the habitat must be. If it was poor habitat, there would not be good numbers of Hogs. If we were able to replicate this habitat all over the country, we could save the Hedgehog. There have been a few sightings of Hedgehogs in other parts of the village but by far the greatest number has been in Chapel Road.

HOGWATCH 2020 Continued

Some of you may already know, but I imagine most of you are unaware, that our humble Hedgehog has been placed on the IUCN [International Union for Conservation of Nature] Red Data list and is described as Vulnerable to Extinction.

However did our iconic and beautiful Hedgehog get to this?

Well, there are many factors as to what's gone wrong and as usual it's down to us humans. I believe, with what we've seen over the last four years with our study, is that the loss of the right type of habitat is a major concern. We have had little or no Hedgehog sightings in areas joining cultivated land. The annual ploughing and/or cultivating must upset the balance of nature for invertebrates within the soil. So that must tell us that ploughed fields growing wheat, barley and beans etc. which are often sprayed with herbicide insecticide and fungicide, is not good news for Hogs. But I don't think we're going to see a decline in ploughed fields any time soon.

Here's something very important that we all can do.

If we all connect our gardens, what I mean by that, is to make an access route between gardens normally known as a 'Hedgehog Highway' by making or cutting a 13cm hole in our fences and walls adjoining your neighbours to give the poor Hedgehog access into all our gardens which put together, adds up to a lot of extra much needed feeding, sleeping and nesting habitat.

Have a word with your neighbour and agree to give our fast declining Hedgehog a better chance of survival.

Hedgehogs must now be hibernating or very near ready. So we must wait until Spring before the action begins again. As usual, any questions or problems such as a Hog out during the day in Winter, get in touch with me.

Phone or text 07437 358587 or email, brianhutchings100@gmail.com



Photo Wikipedia - A young Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) Above



Above Hetty on an early evening walk. Photo Liz & John Ashwell



Above Hetty crossing the Lymbrook. Photo Liz & John Ashwell

NEWSLETTER

Any opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the editors.

Please keep up to date by looking at the Facebook page or the website www.southleigh.info

If you are not presently on the residents' circulatory list please contact Nicky Brooks on nicky@oxcomm.co.uk to receive important updates.

If you know of someone who hasn't got access to a printer please let us know via email: southleighnewsletter@gmail.com

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1 STAR. O STAR OF WONDER, STAR OF
- 2 HOW STILL WE SEE THEE LIE
- 3 IN ROYAL DAVID'S CITY STOOD
- 4 HOLLY, FA LA LA LA LA, LA LA LA LA, 'TIS
- 5 HIM, BORN THE KING OF ANGELS
- 6 STOOD A LOWLY CATTLE SHED
- 7 OF STEPHEN, WHEN THE SNOW LAY
- 8 THOU EVER BLESSED MORN, HAIL
- 9 MORNING. AND WHAT WAS IN THOSE SHIPS
- 10 MOTHER MILD, JESUS CHRIST HER
- 11 STAR WITH ROYAL BEAUTY BRIGHT, WESTWARD
- 12 OF THE DEER, THE PLAYING OF THE
- 13 ANGEL DID SAY, WAS TO CERTAIN POOR
- 14 LAID DOWN HIS SWEET HEAD; THE STARS
- 15 JOY, OH, TIDINGS OF COMFORT AND
- 16 RECONCILED. JOYFUL, ALL YE NATIONS
- 17 WITH HEART, AND SOUL, AND VOICE
- 18 AND TRIUMPHANT, O COME YE, O COME YE
- 19 SHELTER WAS A STABLE, AND HIS
- 20 AND A PARTRIDGE IN A PEAR-TREE

Guess the weight of the



pumpkin! Prize: jar of my honey for the closest

Seasonal South Leigh Recipes

Look out for the latest seasonal recipes online at:

www.southleigh.org/recipes.

Included will be a vegetarian Christmas pie that everyone will enjoy

and a simple one-pot meal madewith chicken, spicy chorizo and cannellini beans.

Mmmmm....



**Dividing the pumpkin
Sunday 13 December
12 noon**

Come and claim a free slice!

Hungarian Blue, a heritage culinary variety from Garden Organic

Nutty flavour, grown organically, no chemicals

Great for soup, roasting, cakes.

Recipes available
Heather Horner, Windrush Cottage, Station Road