

South Leigh & High Cogges News

Important Update From The Parish Council Chair

I LOVE OUR NEWSLETTER WITH ALL THE WONDERFUL VILLAGE THINGS THAT HAVE HAPPENED – IT STRENGTHENS OUR COMMUNITY AND MAKES US SMILE

BUT IN THIS ISSUE, WE HAVE TWO SERIOUS ISSUES TO ASK YOUR HELP WITH.....

NEW HOUSING (Pages 2 & 3)

WODC are about to launch a consultation open to all the district’s residents asking for views about new housing and where it should be placed. Responses will be recorded, and the strongest voice will get their way. If we want to our parish to remain a small community, we need you to make sure that you complete this consultation. It is imperative – obviously towns will want development in the villages or along the A40 and villages will want it in the towns where there are more facilities. The consultation will start at the beginning of September and continue for 8 weeks. We will contact you again to let you know exactly when the consultation is opening and the links to it. If you have neighbours who aren’t very computer literate, please help them. The more responses we give the stronger our voice will be.

This is the first salvo of what is going to be a long fight – you will hear from others in this newsletter that potential housing sites that have been put forward in our parish in the past are likely to reappear.

TRAFFIC CALMING (Pages 4–6)

We all know that traffic through the village goes too fast and there’s too much of it. We have finally got OCC to agree that that is the case and to agree that traffic calming measures will help.

We have a proposed plan which we would like your views on please? You will see that in this newsletter there are plans and suggested locations. These have been carefully thought out and in principle agreed with OCC and their traffic department, but we need your views and approval or not! I would just like to say that it is our view that this is our best chance of controlling speeds through our village.

We will be holding an open meeting at the village hall to cover both these subjects – we thought it would be nice if we offered wine etc and some nibbles. Of course, they will both appear on the monthly PC Agenda along with updates on all the other things that are going on at the moment.

Nicky Brooks, Chair

VILLAGE MEETING
DATE: Tuesday 5th
September from
6.00pm–8pm at the
Village Hall – it is a
drop-in meeting and
Parish Councillors
will be there to answer
any questions or offer
help if wanted. There
will be more detailed
diagrams of the traffic
calming suggestions.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Beware & Help.....2
- Have Your Say On The New Local Plan
.....3
- Traffic Calming.....4-6
- Parish Council Update.....7
- Green Clean Space & Parish Wardens’
Update.....8
- Vicars Letter.....9
- Gerry Stonhill Remembered..... 10-11
- Sleigh Bells Report.....12
- Village Hall & Quiz.....13
- Nature Notes.....14 - 16
- Nature Snippets & Music Group...16 & 17
- Recipes.....18-19
- Volunteering.....20-21
- Walk & Map.....22 -23
- Disclaimer & Quiz Answers.....24

BEWARE AND HELP!

Just five years ago the village was threatened by what I call the “Gladman Curse” when it was proposed that 3000 houses should be built in the village by those property speculators.

The Gladman curse has never gone away - indeed it has been growing secretly and insidiously and will strike once more and possibly sooner than you think **UNLESS YOU HELP.**

There are OTHER THREATS of course, the ANAEROBIC DIGESTER and the spreading of OTHER HOUSING from Eynsham to the West and from Witney to the East aided by IMPROVEMENTS IN THE A40 ACCESS and the possibility of a LIGHT RAILWAY alongside the A40.

UNLESS YOU HELP, South Leigh will become part of a characterless landscape of executive-style houses, with no provision for mixed social environments and absolutely no wildlife or ecological variety apart from that envisaged by urban planners – countryside in plastic.

WODC are revising its local plan and your Parish Council has already started revising our South Leigh Neighbourhood plan.

WODC are consulting on its local plan and **WE URGENTLY ASK YOU PLEASE TO RESPOND TO THE CONSULTATION WHEN WE ASK YOU TO. WE CAN GIVE EVERYBODY HELP WITH THIS IF NEEDED.**

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THIS IS CRUCIAL.

IF WE DO NOT GET THE RESPONSE AND SUPPORT FROM ALL VILLAGERS, SOUTH LEIGH AND ITS SURROUNDS WILL EVENTUALLY RESEMBLE MILTON KEYNES. THAT IS A DEFINITE!

IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY, AND FOR SOUTH LEIGH?

MAKE YOUR VOICE AND OPINIONS COUNT – RESPOND TO THE CONSULTATION WHEN REQUESTED. (Dick Pears)

Have Your Say on the New Local Plan

On August 30th 2023 the WODC will be launching its Local Plan Consultation for 8 weeks closing the 25th October 2023. I recognise many of you are sceptical of consultations, but it is important for you to have your say.

The Local Plan shapes our future and the decisions made for the future of West Oxfordshire, and is key in developing the areas where we live and work ensuring the surrounding environment isn't negatively impacted.

The Local Plan legally has to be reviewed and updated. Many of you will be aware we currently don't have enough housing land supply to meet the current local plan which affects how we make planning decisions. Currently when planning applications are submitted refusal can only be granted if "substantial harm" is identified outweighing the benefits regarding that application.

Aston Parish Councillors and villagers recently spoke at an appeal by Terra to build more houses in Aston. Unfortunately, they were unsuccessful and could not stop the planning being approved as the benefits were considered to outweigh any harm despite presenting a very strong argument.

It is important for those of us in villages to have our say. Within the consultation which is all encompassing they will be looking at where housing should be built. There will be several options for you to look at but two of the options focus on villages.

Dispersed Growth - A more even distribution of growth with emphasis on small - medium scale development taking place in villages.

Village Clusters - similar to above but with villages considered collectively in 'clusters' based on available services and facilities.

Public Transport - Growth to be focused on key public transport corridors (eg A40, A44) potential Carterton Oxford Rail Line and key transport hubs

We all recognise that there is a real need for housing and equally a huge demand for affordable housing. The question is "are villages the right place?" Villages will still play their part in regard to additional housing numbers but without your input it could be much larger and have a much greater impact on where many of us live now.

Whilst this will be available online and will be fully interactive allowing you to make comments WODC will be engaging with Town and Parish Councils and will also be happy to receive written feedback on the consultation via email or post.

Please register now to ensure that you can have your say. Your Parish Council are already working on this but will need your help!

To sign up for more information on the forthcoming Local Plan consultation please or take part in the consultation please follow this link <https://yourvoice.westoxon.gov.uk/en-GB/>

Lysette Nicholls (District Councillor Standlake, Stanton Harcourt, Aston & Northmoor)

lysette.nicholls@westoxon.gov.uk

TRAFFIC CALMING

As you know the PC and OCC have been having a series of meetings to forestall traffic problems which will arise because of any number of variables caused by A40 engineering work and issues like the AD.

We are also having continuing discussions with OCC about signage at entry points to the village, particularly from the A40.

Like you we would like our country roads to remain much as they are, with no traffic challenges but that is impossible.

The following sketches of the suggested traffic calming measures are hopefully self-explanatory.

This scheme is made up of 4 lots of chicanes – 2 on each of Chapel Road and Station Road. Each set will have one that favours out going traffic and the other favours in coming – this is to catch both the evening and morning rush hour traffic. Instead of the chicanes being made of concrete into the ground we are suggesting that white gate style units are used (you see these very often at the entrances to the village on the grass verge). They will be fixed into the road making the road narrower forcing cars to slow down.

On the incoming gateways there will be a sign reminding motorists that they are sharing the roadway with cyclists, pedestrians and horses.

As with other similar systems you see around the district there will have to be additional signage and road markings – please take the time to look at other villages with a similar installation and see how you think that will fit in to South Leigh's environment.

You will see a map showing the suggested location of the 4 sets of chicanes.

You will know that the Parish Council has a long-term plan to make more use of the football pitch but it concerns us that there needs to be a safe place to cross the road. Therefore included in the package is the provision of a 'crossing' - it's only going to consist of a slight-

ly raised different colour tarmac strip with the road markings needed.

Finally, the budget stretches to portable SID signage – this is the sign that flash either with just the speed the person is doing or with a happy or sad face and a slowdown notice. They will be 4 poles erected throughout the village that this device can be placed on and can be moved around as needed.

We realise that this is quite a big change to our village roads and in the past, we have tried to keep street furniture to a minimum but with rising traffic and speed numbers and many other variables likely to come in the future we feel that this is a good fix and comes with our approval.

Please let us have your views either by emailing;

Or contacting us on the village Facebook page

Or in person by visiting one of the Parish Councillors

Or writing to one of the Parish Councillors

Just by way of note – the parish council have done a lot of research into the different speed control systems and their effects as well as meeting with OCC officers on frequent occasions. If anyone would like details of the research, please do contact us.

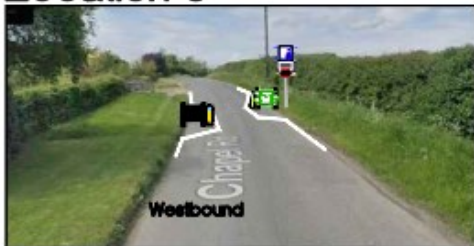
If you want something done about the traffic and speed throughout the village this is our recommended way forward.

We are having a drop in meeting on the 5th September from 6pm at the village hall where you can view the plans in more detail. They will also be on the High Cogges & South Leigh Website.

Nicky Brooks

TRAFFIC CALMING

Location 8



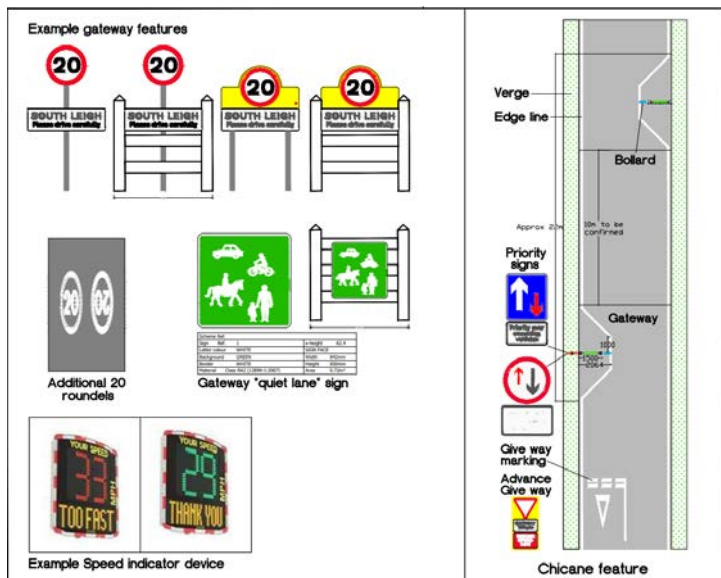
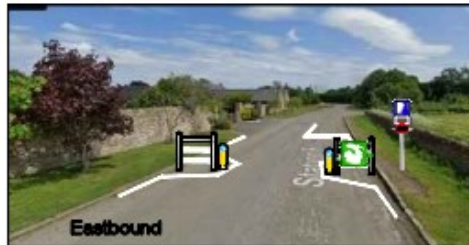
Location 11



Location 15



Location 18



Above are illustrations of the chicanes . Most chicanes will be staggered with the exception of location 18 where they will be aligned due to access and entry requirements.

To the left is some example of signage that could be used.

PARISH COUNCIL UPDATES

The Play Ground Lease

There has been a lot of too-ing and fro-ing with Cottsway who are the landlords. However a new lease will shortly be signed at the same rent – the important difference from the old lease is a widening of the user clause at our suggestion so that it reads “Permitted Use: play park, garden or allotments, nature reserve or other uses for the benefit of the villagers of South Leigh and High Cogges which the Tenant will determine in conjunction with the Landlord.”

The Conservation Area

The Conservation Area application was refused by WODC with wholly inadequate reasons given; so after expert reports, consultation and democratic votes this was the extent of their considered decision:

“We have carefully considered your request in accordance with the criteria set out in Historic England's guidance for appraising places for designation as conservation areas. However, unfortunately, while there is some historic, architectural and evidential interest, we do not consider there is enough special architectural and historic interest to designate South Leigh and High Cogges as a conservation area.”

The reasons are woeful. A meeting with WODC has been requested and will take place in September – that being the earliest the WODC felt they could organise it – such is their engagement. Freedom of Information requests are being considered and the instruction of Bindmans, the solicitors who are waiting in the wings, is also being considered. However a meeting with WODC is the first step. Needless to say the revision of the Local plan makes this issue of even greater importance

Solar Farms

Solar Farms (in or in the immediate vicinity) – there was a deafening silence on both sites and 12 Acre is still not connected and until it is, the parish does not receive its dosh, and as far as Tar Wood Farm is concerned it will some months if not years before there is any progress. Botley West Solar Farm (3,400 acres) has had a huge amount of publicity recently and although it doesn't directly affect us it will change West Oxfordshire if planning goes ahead. Worth looking up and registering your views.

Mobile Signal

Mobile Signal – remarkable, one realises why Britain is beaten by most other economies the new man at BT/EE when chased recently clearly hadn't read the file and it was as though nothing had happened over the years of correspondence and involvement of the MP- needless to say there was a robust response and he had offered me a virtual meeting.

Anaerobic Digester

AD – the Lowlands Planning committee did not have the item on its August agenda and the next dates where it might appear are 11th September and 9th October 2023. However the next significant event will be when the planner makes his report to the committee but the PC are continuing to work on various submissions.

Dick Pears



Clean Green Space

South Leigh residents are committed to keeping the village green-grass play areas free from dog excrement. Dog fouling is not only deeply unpleasant, it is also dangerous. Whilst rare, contact with dog excrement can cause toxocariasis, an infection caused by *Toxocara canis*, a worm found in dogs. Infection can lead to dizziness, nausea, asthma, seizures and blindness.

Whilst most dog owners are caring and responsible individuals there are still some individuals who do not clear up after their dogs. Anyone who fails to clear up after their dog can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice of up to £100, and if the case goes to court, possibly a fine of up to £1000.

You will have seen notices as in the photo below, on the entrance points to the playing field opposite Lymbrook Close, to remind dog walkers to be responsible owners and to keep their dogs on leads as well as picking up any deposits they make. The lead is essential so that you are able to locate their deposit. If they are free-running, it can be almost impossible to find it and it then just gets left. This is our only green playing area of significant size in the village and it needs to be fit for playing on. We are sure that villagers will set a good example to visiting dog walkers by adhering to this request. Remember, it could be you that treads in it or your children or yourself that falls in it, putting your and their health and welfare at risk. Make sure you are a responsible owner.

Ref: keepbritaintidy.org

PARISH WARDENS' UPDATE - Evadne and D'Arcy Vallance

Satnav for the parish paths

You may have already used the free Ordnance Survey map of our parish rights of way at osmap.online/southleigh/ but there's now a new feature - off-road satnav to encourage exploration of lesser-known routes. Just open this web page on any GPS-enabled smartphone and click the little arrow to activate location tracking.

2,600 miles of paths in Oxfordshire

2,602 miles? That's equivalent to more than 10% of the Earth's circumference! But Oxfordshire's footpaths, bridleways and other rights of way really do add up to that. It was one of the things we learned at the annual workshop for Oxfordshire's path wardens, organised by Oxfordshire Ramblers and OCC's Countryside Access Team.

The CAT is a very small team responsible for this huge network of paths. They support path wardens and deal with urgent priorities, but their resources are limited.

So, maintaining our paths depends a lot on landowners and local communities.

Landowners and cross-field paths

We're pleased that the main landowner in our parish, Eynsham Estates, cleared most of their obstructed cross-field footpaths much earlier than last year, in response to our lobbying. This was appreciated by walkers, and next year we hope to see the Estate meet the statutory requirement to restore paths *before* crops obstruct them.

Local communities and path maintenance

Our parish is fortunate to have a few willing volunteers without whom some of our paths would rapidly become impenetrable at this time of year. Special thanks to Martin Spurrier whose trusty tractor mower battled through the dense growth along Bonds Lane and the old railway line last month.

Here are some easy ways to help:

- 1) On your next walk, pop secateurs and gloves in your pocket and snip the odd obstructing bramble. Shove it into the hedge where animals won't tread on it. Nettles? Give 'em a swipe with a stout stick.
- 2) Report any serious obstructions or hazards to us at vallance@clara.net.

View From The Vicar Andy Reid

“One Anothering”

One of Jesus Christ’s most famous sayings, is this one...

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you. By this will all people know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 13 v 34-35

There are 59 verses in the New Testament that refer to “one another” - all of which stem from this command from Jesus to Love one another. Those 59 “one another” verses can be grouped under 4 key headings:

- Love one another
- Be United with one another
- Encourage one another
- Serve one another

But what does it mean to love one another as Jesus has loved us? How did Jesus love us? He loved us enough to give up his royal status in heaven and come to live among us. He loves us enough that he was prepared to die for us so that we might be with him for eternity in paradise. There is little doubt that he loves us a LOT! And in this command to love one another as he has loved us, Jesus is setting a high standard.

South Leigh has always prided itself on its community spirit, and as a part of that “one anothering” has played a key part in how the community has lived and worked together. Looking out for one another, caring for one another, speaking affirming words to one another, standing together, running events and activities together where we can enjoy one another’s company, celebrate special occasions and be community.

In this post-pandemic era, in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis, an energy crisis, it is probably not surprising as we look around, that we see so many more people suffering with poor mental health also. Everything in our society seems to be creaking under the pressure. But this is where I believe that “one Anothering” is one of the key things we can do in our community to help one other get through these troubling times. Not all of us are struggling, but some are. And those who are having a difficult time may not all be struggling in the same way. That is why being in community together is important. It is by looking out for our neighbours and friends, KNOWING one another’s needs and gifts, it is in carrying out random acts of kindness for one another that we build a strong sense of community and togetherness, helping to ensure that no-one feels like they are suffering and struggling alone, where we have a strong sense of pride in the community that we are part of. Let us pray and ask God to show us how we can play our part in this community to build one another up in love.

Prayer: Loving Heavenly Father, your word tells us that you are a God of Love. That in fact you ARE LOVE. Teach us to love, encourage, serve and be united with one another, so that we can stand strong together as a community. Show us where we can use our gifts and strengths to come alongside others who are struggling to care for them and support them, so that they know that they are valued and loved, not just by you, but by each one of us also. We pray this in the Jesus Name and for your glory. Amen.



Gerry Stonhill – Born 27th June 1941 and Died 6th July 2023

Owner of The Mason Arms 1995-2013 Dick Pears



Photo Above courtesy Oxford Mail

With Gerry in charge The Mason Arms was a dining pub rather than a hotel, although there were two B&B bedrooms. It made the Good Food Guide – (I wish I could find the date of my extract) and there refers to food served with great charm and offering potted shrimp, wild smoked salmon, Angus steak, local game with hand cut chips and excellent vegetables. The wines were exclusively French and predominantly claret and burgundy and as the guide says “the whiskies and cognac are out in force.”

Gerry would have been delighted to have his obituary in the Times (as he did) and although there was no chance of him having one in the Guardian, he would have been appalled had such a thing appeared.

Still, Raymond Blanc gave him a favourable review in the Guardian on 29th September 2007 and called it “my all time favourite pub” – “there’s no better way to spend a winter Sunday afternoon. By the time you’ve finished lunch, it’s dark outside, there is a fire going and it’s time for another bottle of claret.”

Gerry was “a character” and as we all know a “character” can mean a number of things - I will leave you to judge.

Menus had no prices – if you needed such information you could not afford to eat there.

One of his delighted appearances in the lime-light was, when in 2008, the government banned smoking in pubs and restaurants and he became a repeat offender. He was ordered to pay a fine and costs of £5,750. He said, relishing the publicity, that the fine was nothing for a rich man and he told a reporter from the Oxford Mail, “You make up what you want, old boy. I’m not making any comment except Tony Blair can stick his anti-smoking law up his arse.”

He said of the Pub, “We don’t like children, mobile telephones or media restaurant critics. We do like our guests to arrive by Hispano-Suiza, Bugatti, Ferrari, in a helicopter or on an MV Agusta.”

Gerry Stonhill – Born 27th June 1941 and Died 6th July 2023

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He didn't much like the inhabitants of South Leigh either, unless he thought they were rich. He did deliver an envelope of reviews, menus and photographs to people he thought were rich newcomers from London to encourage a visit – although he swiftly discovered they'd been living in the village for twenty years, The envelope bore the stamp "Jesus invented fine red burgundy, Ferrari's, cocktails, Cuban cigars and Special Brew because he loves us all very much." He also included flying instructions and coordinates of the pub so they could tell their helicopter pilot where to land. Incidentally the coordinates are North 51:46:49, West 001:25:96.

A newspaper columnist wrote, "Stonhill and his staff have mastered the art of arrogant, off-hand service. I can only leave it to your imagination how guests who were not celebrities are treated." Needless to say, he welcomed Richard Branson, Keith Floyd, Bob Geldof, Jensen Button but one parishioner told me, when she went into the pub as a newcomer and ordered a £5 shandy, he stood over her until she finished and practically escorted her out. "He treated her like riff-raff", she said, but coming from him that was almost a compliment. If he thought you were beneath his notice he was dismissive - "I went in with old clothes and a friend equally scruffy and he was, shall we say, cool until he recognised my friend and his manner changed. "

He reportedly did not allow Jamie Blandford, then heir to the Duchy of Marlborough, to join his sister in the pub because he had once bounced a cheque on him.

As Michael Winner said of him, "The problem with Gerry is someone obviously told him he was a character and he believed them. That was a mistake."

He did have his fan base in the village and a number of loyal customers. The "young'uns" who were employed by him as waiters and washer uppers described him as a generous employer. He was undoubtedly a snob with nothing very much to be snobbish about but some grew fond of him despite his best efforts of discourage them. The pub under his management was certainly put on the map.

I suspect he had demons that he never really came to terms with.



The Mason Arms remains one of the hubs in the village today.
(Photo Tim Laswon)



SLEIGH BELLS' REPORT AUGUST 23

People are drawn to bellringing for all sorts of different reasons: as an act of worship; for the challenge of learning a new skill; for the love of the sound of church bells; for respect for tradition and community; to be part of a wide new social circle; as an alternative to the pub on cold winter evenings, or rainy summer ones. Perhaps a combination of these and others.

In short, a bellringer's motives for regularly standing in an often chilly if pleasingly ancient ringing chamber may be complex, but whatever they are, we aim to provide a service to the community. These days we can sometimes muster a band of three or four to ring for Sunday Service and we would greatly welcome more. Our fun fortnightly practices on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Wednesday of each month are well attended by eight or more ringers from South Leigh and Witney. Come and have a go on a bell between 7:30 and 9:00! If you enjoy it, we could also introduce you to the Saturday morning ringing school at St. Mary's, Witney, where you would learn in the company of others at your stage.

If you love the sound of church bells, you might enjoy reading this extract from a report in the *Oxfordshire Weekly News* of 7



June 1916. The then vicar at South Leigh was welcoming ringers to a meeting of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers held at St. James:

'To his mind, there was no sound of any instrument of music capable of affecting a man's feelings more than church bells, the music was so surpassing all others, whether it were the merry peal for a wedding, or whether it were the muffled peal of sorrow for their dear departed ones, such music seemed to play upon the innermost chords of our nature, and to excite and deepen our sympathy. There was no sound so clear, or so full, or so vibrating as that of the church bell, and it made them to indeed rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.'

Evadne

The Village Hall



The village hall continues to be busy so if you wish to hire it for an event do book early. You will find the village hall calendar under 'Availability' on the village hall web site:- <https://southleighvh.co.uk/hall-availability/> If your chosen date is available fill in the booking form, there is a reduced rate for village residents. Maintenance continues apace.

The outside woodwork has been painted, some of it had faded badly and we are grateful to Martin Spurrier for the loan of his scaffolding tower to enable the large front window to be painted. It is 10 years since David Cameron came to open the newly refurbished hall so really the paintwork has lasted well. We have recently had Grimebusters in to clean the carpet tiles in the small hall, which has made a vast difference to them. The hedges will be cut shortly and there are plans for a new cooker.

We have had 3 wedding receptions in the hall this year and 2 more booked already for next year but our main source of income comes from childrens' birthday parties. With a fairly secure back garden suitable for various games and with a bouncy castle as well it is seen as the ideal place for such events. Please don't stop having kids!

From time to time, but mainly for wedding receptions, we have to rely on Rachel Murphy for extra car parking facilities for which we are very grateful.

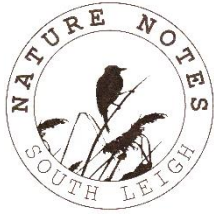
There are now only four of us on the Village Hall committee, Dorothy Carden Noad having recently retired, so do please think about joining us.

We usually meet once a month on an evening that is not already hired out, usually a Tuesday. Committee members are Sam Kelaher, Caroline Auger, Sue Washington & John Ashwell



Unravel the anagrams to solve these teasers. Answers appear elsewhere here.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 APES RULE delight | 9 STOLEN ICE 5-yearly, in general |
| 2 AM REAL MAD preserve | 10 STIRS HOPES artificial replacement |
| 3 RECENT RAP craftsman | 11 CLASS PIE.....not on the menu! |
| 4 PURER POTS enthusiast | 12 IT AMOUNT.....alter for an alteration! |
| 5 ONE MEDAL beverage | 13 COLIN PAT a kind of relationship |
| 6 RATE ICON forming | 14 CEASE OLD grow up! |
| 7 A TOPIC ILL active | 15 ANGRY TEN bird colony |
| 8 RED PASTA they'll make sure you're charged abroad! | |



Wildlife in the Limb Brook...or 'Where have all the invertebrates gone?'

By Rita E Sawrey-Woodwards

Over the last two years, I have been involved in monitoring the chemical pollution in the Limb Brook by analysing the phosphate, nitrate and oxygen concentrations in the water at various sites in the village. You may have seen me clambering down the banks or leaning over the railings of the bridges clutching my jam jar and oximeter in my efforts to obtain a water sample, and to measure the dissolved oxygen which is all-important in promoting the life and reproduction of the fauna living in our streams and rivers. This chemical testing is ongoing and will give us a month-by-month picture over the years of how the chemical composition changes.

In addition to the chemical testing, I am also involved with the Riverfly Partnership which has spearheaded an initiative to monitor the populations of invertebrate larval stages of river flies, such as caddis flies, may flies, stone flies, and other invertebrate species, such as *Gammarus*, the water shrimp, in streams and rivers nationwide to try to find out why river fly populations are diminishing so rapidly. No flies mean no larvae mean no food for fish and other higher species and it was the fishermen who noticed the sharp decline in fly populations in recent years. These invertebrates are particularly vulnerable to pollution and poor water quality.

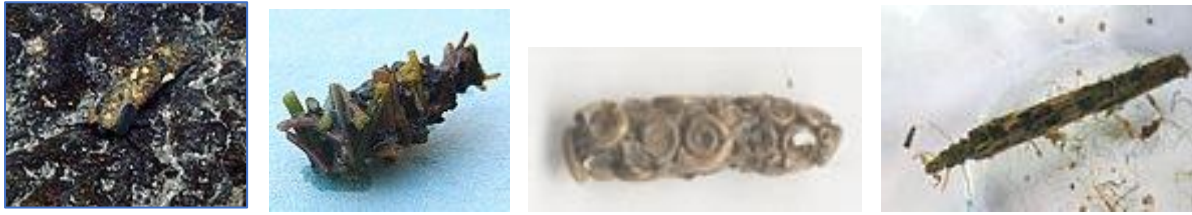
Invertebrates are animals without backbones. The Riverfly Partnership focuses on eight groups of macroinvertebrates i.e. invertebrates that are visible to the naked eye, which are the larval stages of the flies mentioned above, to indicate water quality. Insects have 4 stages in their life cycle, the egg, the larval stage, the pupal stage and the adult stage. The freshwater larvae live and feed in the stream bed or on the plants growing alongside or in the stream. These invertebrate larvae are crucial components of the food chain providing sustenance for fish, birds and mammals. Without them, stream/river biodiversity is compromised. As you know, our Limb Brook fauna has declined drastically over the last 20 years and part of the reason for this could be that essential invertebrates of the food chain are not there to support life.

The water quality in our stream can be compromised by organic pollution from agricultural run-off and waste water discharge from various sources which encourages excessive algal and bacterial growth; these consume the oxygen in large quantities leaving little for other life forms to thrive on (eutrophication). Some freshwater invertebrates, e.g. the larvae of stoneflies and most species of mayflies and caddisflies are particularly sensitive to low oxygen levels and they prefer to live in cooler streams with faster flowing and more turbulent water. Monitoring their presence or absence can be good indicators of water quality. Other invertebrates e.g. shrimps, aquatic worms, leeches, blackfly and midge larvae, are much more tolerant of the organic matter and low oxygen levels. Grazers, such as snails, can be found on stones or plants in slower flowing or standing water, because they feed on algae that grow on surfaces.

Sampling and collecting these invertebrates involve disturbing the stream bed and water weeds, in and on which they live, and capturing the disturbed invertebrates in a net as they flow downstream with the current, and also picking off by hand specimens from rocks and stones lying in the stream. The collected invertebrates are then separated into their groups

and counted. There is a national data base on which this data is stored and analysed. These are the 8 groups that are being monitored:

Gp 1: Cased caddis fly larvae



These construct a case around their soft bodies. The case can be made from small stones or sand grains, plant materials, or snail shells.

Gp 2: Caseless caddis fly larvae Gp 3: Mayfly larvae Gp 4: Flat-bodied Stream Mayfly larvae



These larvae have no case around them.



These have a flat body. They cling to stones or swim at the surface.

Gp 5: Blue-winged olive Mayfly larvae Gp 6: Minnow Mayfly larvae, Olives Gp 7: Stonefly larvae



These swim slowly with a rocking motion.



These are usually crawling on the stream bed reluctantly swimming.

Gp 8: Freshwater shrimp, Gammarus



These are very sensitive to pollution.

Invertebrates found in the Limb Brook June 2023

The site that I kick-test is opposite The Mason Arms as the Limb Brook flows under the bridge. This was chosen as a suitable site because of accessibility and safety in sampling.

The 3-minute kick-testing and 1-minute hand sampling in June 2023 yielded only water slaters (35), tubifex worms (3), snails (3), crane fly larva (1) and *Gammarus* (8).



Water slaters (left) are the aquatic relatives of the garden woodlouse. They can live in low oxygen conditions but they do not necessarily indicate organic pollution.



Crane fly larvae (right) favour humous-rich mud or the cushions or mats made by mosses or aquatic plants.



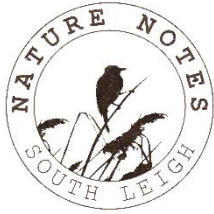
Tubifex worms (left) live in rivers and streams and are a valuable source of food for fish and other freshwater species. They are very tolerant of low oxygen levels and can indicate pollution by organic matter.

This strongly suggests that our stream is not clean enough to support the invertebrate populations that are so important as food supplies for other species, and hence why we find so little life in the Limb Brook.

Relating these observations to the levels of phosphates dissolved in the water of the Limb Brook, these are regularly higher than the levels acceptable for wildlife to flourish, such as the important invertebrates detailed above. Between Shuttles Cottage and The Mason Arms i.e. the stretch along Chapel Road, the phosphate levels in June were around 10 times, and in July, 70 times higher than acceptable. Phosphates enter our waterways from various sources, namely agricultural run-off from the fertilisers used for crop growth, livestock and human waste pollution and chemical pollution from human use of detergents. Downstream of the sewage treatment plant, levels of phosphates in July were 500 times the acceptable level. Thames Water were informed. The Parish Council is working closely with Thames Water to ensure that phosphate stripping treatment is included in our local treatment plant. This involves the installation of expensive equipment which we have been assured will be addressed as soon as possible, targeted for 2024. Meanwhile, all households can make sure that detergents do not get washed into our stream by careless use and disposal and that garden fertilisers are used cautiously and carefully. We can all change the products we use for cleaning to phosphate-free alternatives. Just Google 'Phosphate free detergents' and numerous websites will appear with a multitude of products to choose from. Addressing the livestock waste pollution and the agricultural farming use of fertilisers is a more complex issue.

I will continue to regularly monitor the water quality in the Limb Brook at the 4 sites throughout the village and to kick-test the bed of our stream to observe the invertebrate populations. There is no magic wand to bring back the biodiversity in our stream, only vigilance and care by us humans to treat these habitats with far more respect. Nature is all about the delicate ecological balance of all living species. We humans have upset the equilibrium of our natural world globally and impacted the survival of so many living things; we have no right to dominate this beautiful planet in such a negative way. We need to look at the way in which we live and the ways in which our lives impact other living things which have an equal right to life, and to try and reverse the decline of habitats and biodiversity. South Leigh is a good place to start.

Rita



Nature Notes Snippets

Deer, deer, deer... These visitors to my garden managed to munch up



everything in sight. If you look carefully, the middle one still

has a mouthful of my prize flowers! Lovely to see 'proper' deer instead of muntjacs, though. Roe, I think?



Mrs. Mallard (left) raised her family at the pond in front of Field House.

And now I know why there are so many pigeons around (below). There are three separate nests full at my place. The nest in my

summer house (below left) has incorporated the electrical sockets and connecting wires. We might get a fried pigeon or two one of these days. ms



Who or what are the Tupennyhapenny Tunesmiths?



Can I introduce you to a group of South Leigh villagers who happen to love playing music and who have decided to form a South Leigh Village Band. We have an interesting



ensemble so far consisting of fiddles, concertina, whistle, flute, Paraguayan harp, piano and percussion, plus a possible a Bb trumpet. We meet every few weeks to play together with no fixed genre of music. Each person has the chance to bring their own preferred tunes for us all to play, either as written music or tunes we can learn by ear. So far, we have enjoyed some folk tunes and some Christmas carols. We are privileged to be able to practise together in the homes of some of our players. It is very informal, more on the lines of a session, but

none-the-less our aim is to be able to play good music, to meet up socially and to just enjoy the whole experience. Maybe eventually we might even play in public.....

If you feel you would like to join us, do get in touch with me. All we ask is that you are an adult who is able to play your instrument independently and to a reasonable standard.

Left to Right: Back: John Hampton, Alan Wilson, David Taylor. Front: Louise Taylor, Martin Spurrier, Heather Horner, Rita E Sawrey-Woodwards Contact: Rita E Sawrey-Woodwards on 07969919745

Seasonal South Leigh Recipes

Here are a couple of recipes that can help use up a glut of late summer tomatoes.

Chickpea, Tomato and Harissa Stew with Herb & Yogurt Sauce

(recipe adapted from the Bold Bean company - boldbeanco.com)

A simple and warming supper dish that on warmer days is also delicious cold. The Herb Yogurt topping really complements the gentle heat of the harissa and also makes a delicious dressing in its own right - try it on new potatoes or with lightly poached salmon.

Serves 3 - 4

1 x 700g jar of Bold Bean chickpeas with their liquid or, 2 x tins chickpeas, drained, plus 100ml vegetable stock
2 tbsps olive oil
500g cherry tomatoes
2 garlic cloves, peeled and thinly sliced
3 tbsps harissa paste, or to taste
For the Herb Yogurt Sauce
2 garlic cloves, peeled and grated
zest and juice of one small lemon
a handful of chopped dill, mint or tarragon
1 tbsp capers, drained and roughly chopped
300g Greek yogurt



Heat the oil in a deep frying pan and add the tomatoes. Cook until the tomatoes begin to burst and become slightly charred. Lower the heat and add the garlic, gently cooking for a further minute.

Add the harissa paste, together with the chickpeas and liquid. Stir well, cover and allow to simmer until the liquid has slightly reduced and the tomatoes completely softened.

Mix together all the ingredients for the herb yogurt sauce and set aside. Serve the stew in warmed bowls and top with the herb yogurt sauce and a drizzle of olive oil.

Baked Feta with Tomatoes and Olives

Serves 2

200g block Greek Feta cheese
300g tomatoes, halved or quartered,
depending on size
olive oil
1-2 cloves garlic, peeled and thinly sliced
8 pitted black olives, sliced
small bunch basil leaves, roughly torn
black pepper

Garlic bread and green salad, to serve

Heat the oven to 200°C / Fan 180°C / Gas 6. Place two sheets of foil on a baking tray and drizzle with oil. Cut the Feta into two pieces and place one in the centre of each piece of foil. Randomly sprinkle the tomatoes and remaining ingredients on top of the cheese, finishing with a grinding of black pepper and a drizzle of olive oil.



Gather up the sides of the foil and scrunch them together to seal the packets. Place in the hot oven for approximately 20 minutes. Serve immediately with garlic bread and green salad.

Volunteering – The King’s Coronation Wish

We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give – Winston Churchill

Helpers Paint the Summer House

Following on from King Charles’ request that communities should promote ‘volunteering’, a village e-mail appeal in early August went out for budding Picassos to help re-furbish the summer house at



the Village Hall so that it will remain a village amenity that we can all use and be proud of. This takes work, though. Four residents came forward with paint brushes in hand.

Village Hall Committee Chair, John Ashwell, led the band of trusty artisans in the project. New fascia boards were made to replace the old rotten ones

and the entire summer house received two coats of paint after a light sanding.



Painting the wooden grilles that separate the window panes proved to be an exacting task but it was all completed and it now

looks brand new! Thank you John A, Sue W, Anne C and Martin S.

The next project will be painting the love seat in the garden. All volunteers are welcome. Please contact John A on 01993 703534.



Village Hall gets a New Coat

The Village Hall exterior paintwork has been completely restored by a professional painter. Again, though, volunteering played its part as the VH Committee was loaned a scaffolding tower by a resident saving the Committee money for other community uses.

Volunteers Treasure our Footpaths (Also see the Footpath Report elsewhere)

“Paths are the habits of a landscape. They are acts of consensual making. It’s hard to create a footpath on your own...Paths connect. This is their first duty and their chief reason for being. They relate places in a literal sense, and by extension they relate people.

“Paths are consensual, too, because without common care and common practice they disappear: overgrown by vegetation, ploughed up or built over (through they may persist in the memorious substance of land law). Like sea channels that require regular dredging to stay open, paths NEED walking”. Robert MacFarlane, [The Old Ways: A Journey on Foot](#)

Small teams of volunteers have worked on footpaths including Moore Lane and Bond's Lane to keep them open and more accessible for walkers and so that one volunteer can get his small tractor (below left) through to speed up the job. Most recently, in particular, Bond's Lane at the crossways half way up has been widened (below centre) and sizable overhead growth cleared. The cuttings will be shredded soon... except that the tractor is not very well (below right). We are hoping for a speedy recovery! Many thanks to Gary N, Dick P, D'Arcy V, Evadne V, Richard L, Jane L, Graham S, Martin S, Nick K, Russel C, Anne C, Remy M and others. Many apologies for any omissions. Everyone's contribution is valued enormously.



recovery! Many thanks to Gary N, Dick P, D'Arcy V, Evadne V, Richard L, Jane L, Graham S, Martin S, Nick K, Russel C, Anne C, Remy M and others. Many apologies for any omissions. Everyone's contribution is valued enormously.

Resident-led Voluntary Projects *If you' like to get involved, be it for just an hour or two or much more, here is the list of activities that you might like to join, all led by volunteers:*

- | | |
|--|--|
| Anaerobic Digester | David Hindley |
| Bell Maintenance | Martin Spurrier |
| Bell Ringing | Heather Horner |
| Bus Shelter | Martin Spurrier |
| Church inside cleaning project etc | Karen Wilson |
| Church Warden | Vacant |
| Church – flowers rota | Liz Ashwell |
| Churchyard clearing projects | Heather Horner |
| Conservation Area | Gary Nicholl/Dick Pears/Martin Spurrier |
| Defibrillator | John Ashwell |
| Football Field | Martin Wilson/Nicky Brooks |
| Litter picking | Janet Soame |
| Endless jobs around the Parish | Martin Collett |
| The Parish Council | Nicky Brooks |
| The Parish Newsletter and distribution | Lysette Nicholls/John Ashwell/Martin S+ distributors |
| Playground | Karen/Martin Wilson |
| Post Quiz Night at the Pub | Graham Soame/Caroline Gane |
| SLUG (South Leigh United Gardeners) | Richard Law |
| South Leigh Forest Restoration work | David Brooks/Martin Spurrier |
| South Leigh Trust work | Richard Law |
| SpeedWatch | Peter Grant |
| The village Litter Blitzes | John Ashwell |
| Village Green maintenance | Dick Pears |
| Village Hall committee | John Ashwell |
| Village Hall Emergency generator project | Martin Spurrier |
| Village web site | Gary Nicholls |
| Wild Wildflower, Limb Brook clearing, Chapel Road and Station Road | Graham Soame |
| Water pollution monitoring work and Limb Brook project | Rita Sawrey-Woodwards |
| NTWI Ladies' Tea & Chat | Liz Ashwell |

Get Involved! Ask any of us about Volunteering in the Parish For contact details of any of the above Leaders, please contact Nicky Brooks, Chair, South Leigh & High Cogges Parish Council 01993 701137 or Martin S. on 07799368464



BAMPTON AND RIVER THAMES CIRCULAR

A low level walk through meadows and along a stretch of the Thames Path, with the opportunity to explore historic

Bampton.

Distance: 6 ½ miles. Allow 3 hours (excluding stops & exploring Bampton)

Parking: Bampton centre, in Market Square by Town Hall or on Broad Street nearby ('P' on map).

Refreshments: Pubs/Cafes in Bampton.

From Market Square go along Bridge Street, then along Cheyne Lane on L opposite The Horse Shoe PH & bear R onto path alongside wall. Cross brook (Shill Brook) then bear sharp R & L & continue ahead on path (ignore lane on R). Pass through gate straight ahead (waymarker) & continue through open fields (firstly alongside fence).

Stay on this wide well-defined path to follow alongside hedge after sharp R & L bends. Around 200 yds after passing through hedge the path bears diagonally L at marker post. At hedge go R (don't cross footbridge) & stay by hedge to bear sharp R (waymarker) on wide field margin & cross footbridge in hedge straight ahead. Now go L on wide track(footpath) which then bears R. Continue ahead at crossways(marker post) to reach gate straight ahead. Cross stile & bear diagonally R across field to pass through gate then bear L to cross Sharney Brook. Now follow way-marked route across meadow to reach Rushey Lock.

Follow Thames Path signs by crossing to L of lock, bear L at kiosk to pass alongside the fine lock-keeper's cottage. Built at end of C19 this was once a guest house, frequented by celebrities including Errol Flynn, David Niven, Douglas Fairbanks & Vivien Leigh. Cross Thames at weir to see wooden paddles . Rushey Lock is 1 of 2 Thames locks to retain paddles from the old 'flash' locks ; whilst these paddles are displayed but not now used , those at Northmoor Lock are still in use.

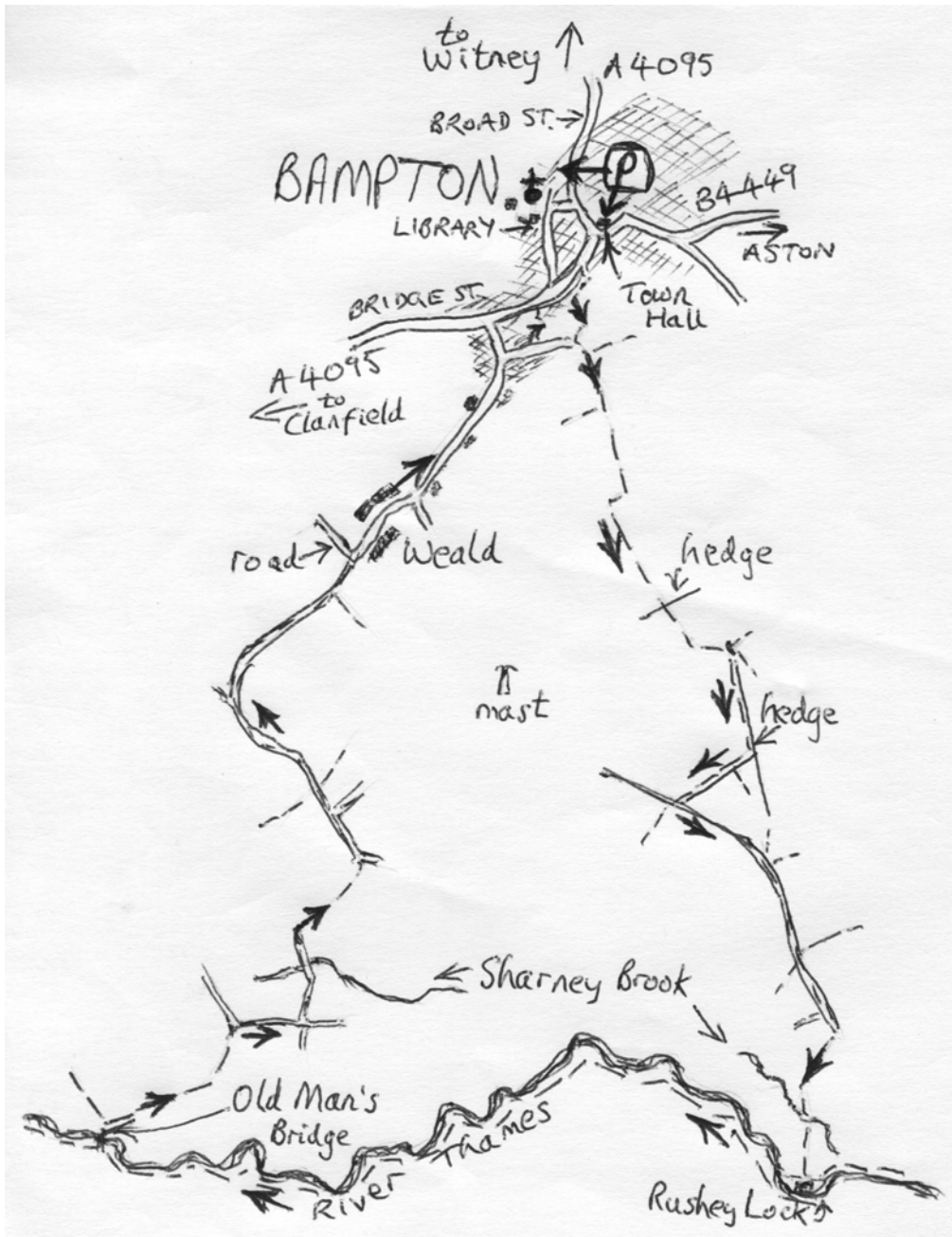
Go R on Thames Path, which you follow for 2 miles to take you to Old Man's Bridge in its tranquil setting. Along this stretch you are likely to see more by hugging the river bank wherever possible through the meadows. Note the pillbox off to R, 1 of many that formed the Thames defensive line with the threat of invasion in WW2. Cross river at the bridge then bear R on well-defined path across meadow, keeping to L of brook & shrubbery. The path bears L to stile by gate & on to firm track a short way to junction, where go R for 200 yds or so to crossways.

Now go L, cross Sharney Brook, pass through gate & immediately through 2nd gate on R onto narrow path between hedges. At end bear sharp L on wide grassy path & continue straight ahead at both the next routes junction & crossways about 100 yds further on. Follow alongside brook on R to bear round to L & later sharp R. Along here, with farm buildings ahead (to which you are heading) , you will see a tall mast through opening on R ; this is the site of the former RAF Bampton Castle Signal Unit, which dealt with high frequency radio communications & was in use between 1939 & 2006. The site is now part of Bampton Business Centres.

Continue onto road, where go R to pass through the settlement of Weald. Further along, where road bears L at speed limit signs, go R on lane (footpath finger post opposite) for about 100 yds to reach Spring Cottages on R. Go L here on narrow path between hedge & fence to bring you back to Bridge Street at Mill Green. Now go R, crossing Shill Brook on your way back to the town centre.

Bampton is an ancient market town & very well worth looking around—particularly inside the Grade 1 Listed church (dating back to C10/C11). Also close to the church are Churchgate House (the former Rectory dating from C16) & the Library (originally a free school built in mid C17) and Archive Centre, where you will find a wealth of fascinating information on Bampton & its history. RC

BAMPTON AND RIVER THAMES CIRCULAR



VILLAGE HALL

Village Hall Committee

John Ashwell (Treasurer)
Sam Kelaher (Bookings)
Sue Washington
775574
Caroline Auger
834899

Please contact the village hall committee if you can help by becoming a committee member

The South Leigh Charity

The South Leigh Charity has been helping people in the parish for centuries. It has wide-ranging powers and can provide help in many ways.

If you know someone who might benefit from what the charity has to offer, would like to make a donation to it or would like to become a trustee, please contact, in confidence, one of the Trustees:

Richard Law, Chair
(01993 773355 or
ralaw1984@gmail.com)

John Ashwell (703534)

Sue Washington (775574)

Karen Wilson (771346)

Rita Sawrey-Woodwards

DISCLAIMER

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.southleighandhighcogges-pc.gov.uk

If you are not currently on the residents' circulatory list please contact Nicky Brooks to receive important updates.

Newsletter@[southleighandhighcogges-pc.gov.uk](mailto:newsletter@southleighandhighcogges-pc.gov.uk)

COPY Deadlines South Leigh News

January 18th 2023

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1 PLEASURE 2 MARMALADE 3 CARPENTER
- 4 SUPPORTER 5 LEMONADE 6 CREATION
- 7 POLITICAL 8 ADAPTERS 9 ELECTIONS
- 10 PROSTHESIS 11 SPECIALS 12 MUTATION
- 13 PLATONIC 14 ADOLESCE 15 GANNETRY

The South Leigh News Photograph Requests

South Leigh News and High Cogges 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 : newsletter@southleighandhighcogges-pc.gov.uk