# From the Horse's Mouth

The Horspath Magazine

October
November
2026

Issue
26



Photograph by Carol Cuthbert,
for the competition at the Village Show

# SCARECROW Trail

## Sat 24th Oct to Sun 1st Nov




## HORSPATH GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

**Back for 2026! We need families to recreate their favourite movie for the scarecrow trail. Register your idea now.**

**Forms available from Shop notice board or Gatey Bus Stop**

**More information-**

**Text 07543890405 or email horspathevents@hotmail.com**

# Horspath Dog Show & Village Show — Thank You!
## Saturday 5th September 2026

A huge, heartfelt THANK YOU to everyone who came along, took part, and supported our show yesterday!

It was such a wonderful day — full of brilliant dogs and humans, amazing entries, and that fantastic Horspath community spirit we all know and love. None of it would have been possible without you!
Fiona Smith




**Overall Winner**
Awarded the
Katherine Riley Cup

Thomas Butler

**Overall Children's Winner**

Antonia Timbs

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Garage | 873349 | Queen's Head | 875567 |
| Gurkha Palace | 634534 | Sheps Cycle Shack | 876771 |
| Horspath Nursery | 876750 | St Giles' Church | 07856 456363 |
| Horspath School | 872702 | Sunnyhill Vineyard | 361535 |
| Community Hub | 07591 933964 | Tap Room (Brewery) | 604620 |
| Magazine Editor | 07825 615735 | Village Hall | 07939 410762 |
| Prospect Maintenance | 07786 115516 | Village Shop | 872903 |

# The Saga of Sandy Lane

In the last issue of our magazine, I reported the problems caused to residents by the establishment of a depot by The Freedom Group at The Piggeries on Sandy Lane. (Freedom Group is the company employed by SSEN to change the electricity cables across Oxfordshire). Thank you to everyone who registered a complaint with SODC - it has helped the Council to take some action and they continue to investigate to see what else can be done. 5mph signs were quickly erected at the bottom and along Sandy Lane and a “Not suitable for Heavy Vehicles” appeared at the bottom of Gidley Way.

Letters were dispatched to The Freedom Group from individuals and The Parish Council by the end of July expressing the concerns raised by residents. A reply was received by mid- August covering a number of the questions raised in our letters - a reassurance that the depot would close by the end of January 2027; the site operates under a formal agreement with the landowner and this entitles them to use Sandy Lane; personnel and contractors are instructed to give priority to walkers, cyclists and horses and travel at low speeds; Freedom only uses vehicles that are lawfully permitted on public highways; environmental management arrangements are in place; risk assessments have been carried out. They have instructed personnel not to use Old Road as a means of access and will actively investigate any specific incidents of inappropriate behaviour where evidence is provided. A meeting has been requested by members of the Parish Council which is yet to take place. There was no comment or apology about the lack of communication prior to any of this work taking place which is a worrying aspect especially as The Freedom Group (as part of a company called NG Bailey) purport to “work in a socially responsible manner in local communities”. If any residents have evidence that The Freedom Group is not behaving responsibly, please communicate this to SODC.

In the meantime,

**Tim Bearder, Leader of Oxfordshire County Council has been working with Oxfordshire County Council Officers and SODC to try to resolve some of the issues. He writes**,

*“I wanted to update you on what I have been doing regarding Sandy Lane and the apparent depot that has been established there. From the County Council’s perspective, we are somewhat constrained because a bridleway can generally be used to access land where the user owns the land or has permission from the landowner. It appears that Freedom Utilities has a contract with the landowner and is therefore entitled to use the lane. However, they are using what appear to be unnecessarily large vehicles and County*

*officers are monitoring the condition of the road surface and verge. The intention is that any damage caused by their use of the lane should be reinstated by the company.*
*From the district perspective, I have been working with the planning officers. They have visited the site and spoken to the landowner, and there is a potential breach that the Council is now considering how best to address.*
*As is often the case with officer site visits of this kind, they have also identified some other issues along the lane, which are now being investigated. We would like to thank all the parishioners who have helped gather evidence and information. It has been extremely useful in allowing us to move things forward.*
*I remain frustrated by the time this is taking, but unfortunately these matters can take some time to resolve, particularly where there are legal and planning considerations that officers have to work through. I am continuing to push for progress and, once we have looked at all the details and have something more substantive to report, we will come back to you."* **Watch this space!** **Sue Rowell**

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## Village Hall Raffle helps RESTORE

Here is a Rob Judges presenting a cheque for £272 raised at the recent Village Show raffle, to Rui Nogueira of RESTORE.




Restore has been supporting individuals across Oxfordshire since 1977. People are supported towards their own mental health recovery goals, such as rebuilding confidence and skills, often moving-on to employment, volunteering or training. Members can attend recovery groups weekly for up to two years and receive one-to-one coaching. Restore is also home to Oxfordshire Recovery College for courses that support recovery, and Restore provides workplace mental health training.

All children new and existing have been settling well into Nursery life, learning the routines or re-establishing them. During term 2 we will be looking at Halloween, Autumn, Bonfire/ fireworks night, Diwali, Children in need, Remembrance Day, Thanksgiving, Winter, Arctic animals, Christmas and New Year.

Our **fundraising** events for term 2 will be a Halloween Party, Christmas Bingo and Wriggly Nativity Performance.

**The baby group** continues to run at Horspath Hub from 9:30am until 10:30am on Mondays. To book a place please get in touch with Jo via email – staff@horspathnursery.org.uk










**Look out for posters on the village noticeboard advertising our fundraising events.**

**Horspath Nursery, Blenheim Road, Horspath, Oxford, OX33 1RY**

**staff@horspathnursery.org.uk Tel: 01865 876750**

**The new school year is well underway at Horspath C of E Primary School**,

and we are delighted to welcome all of our pupils and families back. The children have returned full of enthusiasm, quickly settling into their new classes and demonstrating a wonderful commitment to their learning and school life.

A heartfelt thank you goes to the dedicated parents who generously volunteered their time over the summer holiday to help paint and freshen up various areas of the school. Their efforts have created a brighter, more inviting environment that both staff and children are enjoying.

We would also like to express our appreciation for our fantastic pupil Buddies, who have been doing a wonderful job guiding and supporting our youngest learners as they adjust to school life. Their care, patience, and leadership have made a big difference in helping our newest pupils feel right at home.

Looking ahead, we have several key events on the horizon that bring our school and local community together. We are looking forward to our upcoming Harvest Festival service at the church, as well as our Macmillan Coffee Afternoon, where we hope to raise vital funds for a great cause while enjoying some tea and cake together.

Out on the playground, our newly appointed Opal Play Leaders are already in post, doing an admirable job organising equipment and facilitating active, creative outdoor play during break times.

We extend a warm welcome to our new PTA committee and express our thanks to all members for their continued dedication and support in enriching our school community. We are looking forward to working with you to raise important funds for our school.

With best wishes

**Mrs Serena Courtney** | Headteacher

let your light shine




**When you come to The Hub** you will notice that it has a "new improved" look. We have redone the hall floor, put new cupboard doors on the kitchen cupboards, and painted throughout. Not to forget deep cleaning the floors. We couldn't have done it without a very generous gift from Heather Palmer who, throughout her life and after her death supported us up to the hilt. A very generous and remarkable lady. And so the Hub is set to continue for a long time ahead.

**Thank you so much Heather**

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## Film Club at the Hub

For those uninitiated film goers, why not join us on the second Wednesday of the month for a couple of hours of good cinema and , of course, tea and homemade cake in the interval. All for £5. We can't give you a list of the next films but if you let us know your email we will advise you nearer the time.

**Do come and try us out ... .It's lots of fun!**

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## Baby Cardigans hand knitted in Horspath

Hand knitted baby cardigans from birth upwards. Various patterns and colours available and I can also produce specifically to your requirements. Prices start at £5 per cardigan and £10 for Aran Jackets. If interested please email me at:

**brenda.green@hotmail.co.uk or text me on 07929 753886**

# CLASSES AND ACTIVITIES AT THE HORSPATH HUB

| | |
|---|---|
| **MONDAYS** | |
| Horspath Nursery Baby Group (Weekly term time only) | 0930-1030 |
| Pilates (Weekly) | 1015-1115 |
| Making Time (1st Monday of the month) | 1400-1500 |
| Horspath Art Group (Weekly except the 1st Monday of the month) | 1430-1630 |
| Elevate Fitness (Weekly) | 1900-2000 |
| **TUESDAYS** | |
| Table Tennis (Weekly) | 1000-1200 |
| Seated Pilates (Weekly) | 1400-1500 |
| Vinyasa Flow Yoga (Weekly) | 1900-2015 |
| **WEDNESDAYS** | |
| Pilates (Weekly) | 0815-0915 |
| Horspath Senior Residents Club (1st Wed of the month) | 1400-1600 |
| Film Club (2nd Wednesday of the month) | 1400-1600 |
| **THURSDAYS** | |
| Fitzroy Support (frequency to be arranged) | 1000-1300 |
| Line Dancing (Weekly) | 1400-1530 |
| Creative Writing (about every six weeks) | 1530-1700 |
| **FRIDAYS** | |
| Coffee Morning (Weekly) | 1000-1200 |
| Age UK Information Drop-In (1st Friday of the month | 1000-1200 |
| Horspath Wine Club (3rd Friday of the month) | 1930-2130 |
| **SUNDAYS** | |
| Sunday Funtime (1st Sunday of the month) (For children under 11 years accompanied by an adult) | 1100-1200 |

For more information about each class please visit our website at:

www.horspathhub.co.uk

And go to the **CLASSES** page

Many thanks

# Horspath crowned Cherwell Cricket League champions




Horspath Cricket Club's 2nd XI celebrated being crowned Cherwell League champions. Having clinched the Division 1 title with a game to spare, Ryan Hicks's side sealed their success with a resounding 172-run win over Westbury at the Recreation Ground on the last day of the season. It's the fourth time Horspath have won the Cherwell following previous triumphs in 2010, 2013 and 2024 but the first time with the 2nd XI They become only the third 2nd XI to win the league, which comprises 102 clubs with 229 teams spanning six counties, following Aston Rowant 2nd (2016) and Banbury 2nd (2022). Dominic O'Connor hit a magnificent unbeaten 152 as Horspath posted 300-3 against Westbury, who collapsed to 128 all out.  Ed Oakley played a leading role in the side's success with 37 wickets - the second-best in the division - including 6-52 in a five-wicket win at Oxford Downs 2nd. Sravan Konidena hit an unbeaten 100 as Horspath signed off their Home Counties Premier Cricket League Division 2 campaign with a five-wicket win at Thame Town. It took his tally to an impressive 638 runs this season, while Derval Green also shone, accumulating 512 as the side finished in seventh spot. **Horspath 3rd** enjoyed a strong season, missing out on promotion from Cherwell Division 3B by a single point after enjoying a seven-match winning streak. **Abigail Wallace became the first Horspath player to hit a century in the Home Counties Women's Cricket League** with a brilliant 109 in a 115-run home win over Haddenham. She shared a superb 184-run opening stand with Tracey Isaac (73) as Horspath posted a club record score of 297-3 in the Division 3C encounter, before holding the visitors to 182-6. One of the highlights of a busy youth season saw **Horspath Under 13s finish top** of their Pool in the Oxfordshire Under 13 League. The youngsters' achievements were marked with a successful presentation evening at the club.

**Photograph: Horspath 2nd line up with the Cherwell League Division 1 trophy**

## Horspath Cricket Club's Charity Day a big success

Horspath Cricket Club's third Charity Fun Tape Ball Six-A-Side Competition proved a big hit at the Recreation Ground. Ten teams consisting of around 60 men's and women's players, juniors, friends and supporters took part in the event on August Bank Holiday Sunday in aid of Mind and Oxfordshire Mind. The amount raised for the two charities has yet to be finalised, but it's anticipated it will be a healthy sum with thanks to everyone who supported the event. With the sides wearing coloured shirts generously donated by Newtrim (Uk) Ltd and two matches running alongside each other throughout the day on the main ground, the Rec was buzzing with activity. In a change to the playing rules this year, men's cricketers were required to bat with a reverse stance in an attempt to achieve a more level playing field. But, with music accompanying the action, it didn't stop sixes and wickets galore as tape balls - tennis balls wrapped in electrical tape - flew to all parts in front of a good-sized crowd with villagers out in force to support the event. While the focus was on fun and raising money, the teams competed in two groups and semi-finals before the Blue team, including Sravan Konidena, triumphed against the Grey team, led by Ryan Hicks, with sixes showering down in the final. Chief organiser Marc 'Diddy' Bridges presented the cup and medals to the winners and runners-up. After the event, Olivia White, Oxfordshire Mind's Events And Fundraising Manager, said: "I just wanted to say a huge thank you to everyone at Horspath Cricket Club for organising and supporting the Charity Day in aid of Mind and Oxfordshire Mind. "Fundraising events like yours make such a meaningful difference, helping to raise both vital funds and awareness for mental health." A spokesperson from the Mind Community Fundraising Team added: "We're so proud of what you've done to support us. The money you've raised will make a real difference for the 1 in 4 of us facing a mental health problem each year."




**Photography by Les Dawson: The Winning Blue Team and Diddy**

FitzRoy
transforming lives

## At the Hub - Thursday 11th September 2026




*FitzRoy Support recently held a community event at* ***Horspath Hub*** *to celebrate the people we support across our many services throughout Oxfordshire. We remain committed to transforming lives and creating opportunities for people to come together and celebrate their achievements.*

*We were delighted to welcome so many attendees, including individuals from other services and providers, as well as family members and friends. The event provided a wonderful opportunity for people to reconnect with familiar faces, make new acquaintances, and form meaningful friendships. It was a positive and inclusive occasion that reflected the strong sense of community and connection within FitzRoy.*

*adviceline@fitzroy.org*

**Spot the difference….**

How many people have been removed from the bottom picture!








## Photography Competition Draws Impressive Entries

This year, the photography competition was held as part of the Village Show, with all entries displayed in the Village Hall. The change was made because the village calendar was not being produced for next year. The new format led to a little confusion. Some people thought there was an entry fee, but there wasn't, and others believed photographs had to be taken in Horspath, which was not a requirement. Hopefully, everything will be clearer next year. "We had a lot of brilliant entries," commented Jo from the Arts Group when she saw the photographs displayed around the Village Hall. One of the entries, submitted by Carol Cuthbert, has been chosen for the cover of this magazine. The competition was judged by Horspath archivist and retired professional photographer Brian Lowe. The final decision was a difficult one, coming down to two striking photographs of light shows by Bob Swan and Nigel Montgomery. In the end, Bob Swan was awarded the trophy. Thank you to everyone who took part. We hope to see even more entries next year. The theme for 2027 will be **Abstract**, so think shapes, movement, unusual perspectives, multiple exposures, out-of-focus imagery, or anything else that sparks your creativity. We look forward to seeing your entries next year. Prints from this year's competition will remain on display on the boards just inside the Village Hall for entrants to collect and enjoy. Many thanks Rob Judges

# ST. GILES PATRONAL FESTIVAL REVIVED !

It's that time of year again ! With part of the well-known St. Giles Fair coming to Horspath on their annual pilgrimage on the green, it was most appropriate that St. Giles Church celebrate the event by holding a Patronal Festival as in former years. We were fortunate in both having Father Malcolm Surman with us, who planned and also presided over the occasion, which was a Benefice service with our sister parishes. Beginning at the gate, we processed up the path singing, and into the Church where St. Giles was much in evidence, with a special altar frontal showing the hind and the arrow, the lovely ceramic of the saint on show, and a specially made celebratory cake with candles by the font. Following the service – a communion combined with children' s activities, it ended with the cutting of the cake and refreshments all round. Earlier in the week a full peal on the bells was also rung, dedicated to St. Giles, and on the Sunday ringers from both Horspath and Cuddesdon rang for the Patronal Service. **St. Giles**, also known as Aegidius, was a hermit in the early 8th.c, who was wounded and crippled by an arrow shot at a hind he was protecting during a hunt… thus becoming the patron saint of cripples and lepers. His churches are often found at road junctions by nearby smithies, where travellers' horses could be shod !

*Brian Lowe*



## HOT CHOCOLATE FOR WHEATLEY PARK PUPILS



" Revd Tom and volunteers from St Giles' Church recently met pupils from Wheatley Park Secondary School, when they got off the school bus in Horspath, and handed out free pencil cases, sweets and hot chocolate. This is part of St Giles' Church outreach to our local community, and our desire to keep in touch with our young people after they leave Horspath Primary School.

We would love to be able to give out **knitted angels**, or similar, to Primary School pupils at Christmas-time. Please contact Tom (email: therevdtomwallis@gmail.com), or a Churchwarden, if you could help us to knit enough angels."

**VACANCY: St Giles' Church wish to appoint a Treasurer.**

The role is voluntary, but we would be extremely grateful for your help.

Ideally, candidates should have experience of basic accounting or bookkeeping.

Duties include: handling fees and spreadsheets and completing quarterly returns to the Diocese; financial updates to the Parochial Church Council approximately every two months; recording financial transactions; producing annual accounts (balance sheet, income and expenditure).

Please email: **gchbenefice@gmail.com or therevdtomwallis@gmail.com** for more information. Thank you.

**From the Vicar** Dear Friends, Last month, I enjoyed attending the Horspath Village Show. There were some lovely dogs (and a puppy!) at the dog show, and I enjoyed several good conversations around the ring. The exhibits in the Village Hall were also excellent, although the extreme temperatures and lack of rain this summer had clearly made life harder for gardeners and allotment holders. Climate change seems to have had a significant impact on our gardens, fields and allotments this year, and I suspect it has been a particularly challenging season for our farmers. One of the many joys of living and ministering in this part of Oxfordshire is that creation is never far away. We see it in the hedgerows that change colour with the seasons, the fields that shape the landscape around us, and the birds whose morning chorus greets each new day. Last month, our church marked both Harvest and a new festival in the church year: **The Festival of Creation in Christ**. I would like to share a little about this celebration.As Christians, we often speak of creation as God's gift, but this festival invites us to go a little deeper. It reminds us that creation is not only made by Christ but also held in Christ. The early Christians spoke of Jesus as the One in whom "all things hold together" — the seasons, the rhythms of growth and renewal, and the persistence of life even through difficult times. In a village like Horspath, this is not just an abstract idea. We see it whenever a field is ploughed, a garden is tended, or a child delights in finding a conker. The Festival of Creation in Christ encourages us to reflect on our place within creation, not as owners but as stewards, and not as consumers but as participants in God's ongoing work of renewal. Many people who work closely with the land speak of its spiritual value. Farmers, gardeners and allotment holders often describe how caring for the earth teaches humility, patience and trust. Others experience a similar sense of connection simply by walking the footpaths or pausing to appreciate the changing light across the fields. Creation has a way of grounding us and reminding us that God's presence is woven into everyday life. This festival gave us an opportunity to thank God for the goodness of creation and to consider how we can care more faithfully for the earth entrusted to us. While acknowledging the challenges facing creation today, the festival is ultimately about joy: joy in God's creation, joy in community, and joy in the knowledge that Christ holds all things, including us, in His sustaining grace. As we give thanks for the harvest, may God deepen our gratitude, strengthen our care for the world around us, and open our eyes to His presence in creation. **With love and prayers, Tom**

# Services at St Giles' Church
# October and November 2026

## October

**Sunday 4th Trinity 18**
11.00am Morning Worship
11.00am Sunday Funtime in the Hub

**Sunday 11th Trinity 19**
11.00am Parish Communion

**Sunday 18th Pet Service**
11.00am for 11.15am Family Time

**Sunday 25th Last Sunday after Trinity**
11.00am Parish Communion

## November

**Sunday 1st - All Saints Day**
11.00am Morning Worship
11am Sunday Funtime in the Hub
3.00pm Benefice Service of Light

**Sunday 8th - Remembrance Sunday**
10.50am *Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial* followed by Parish Communion at St Giles
3.00pm Story-Time Church in the Forest Church at Rippon College

**Sunday 15th 2nd Before Advent**
11.00am for 11.15am Family Time

**Sunday 23rd Christ the King**
11.00am Parish Communion

**Sunday 30th Advent Sunday**
10.00am Benefice Communion Garsington
11.00am Sunday Funtime in the Hub

**For your Diary:**

6th Dec. Shotover Singers 5pm
20th Dec.Family Christingle Service 11am
Village Carol Service 3pm
24th Dec.Crib Service 4pm
Midnight Mass 11.30pm

## And in St Giles' Church..... (Thursdays)

**5th November** - Colours **3rd December** - Christmas

**Chatter & Clatter**
(For Pre-School Children)
Come and join us for tea/coffee and cakes between **1.30pm - 3pm**.
All Welcome
Meet some of the younger members of our community and chat to their parents.

**Action Stations**
(After School Activities)
From 3.15 - 4.30pm
Activities include, craft, games and refreshments
All Welcome



## A letter from

## Freddie van Mierlo MP

In August, following a short and much needed break from politics for a family holiday to Austria, I returned to work refreshed and full of energy to start my Summer Tour. The tour was a chance to get out to villages in Henley & Thame that I hadn't managed to visit during the year. I thoroughly enjoyed visiting all corners of the constituency, and am hugely grateful to everyone who came to meet with me in Stanton St John, Forest Hill, Warborough, Little Milton, Stoke Row, Checkendon, Kingston Blount, Sydenham, South Stoke and Whitchurch-on-Thames. We got through nearly sixty appointments and had very informative meetings with parish, district and county councillors in each location too. I'm keen to continue listening and engaging - solving local issues where I can, and weighing in on national and international concerns on your behalf. I'm already planning where to go next year! In the meantime if you have any issues or concerns you wish to raise with me, please don't hesitate to get in touch by emailing **freddie.vanmierlo.mp@parliament.uk** . On my return to Westminster I flagged the concerns many residents and parish councils shared with me locally about Local Government Reorganisation by asking Louise Haigh, First Secretary of State to reconsider the new Greater Oxford unitary authority. The Government had shown a real disregard for rural Oxfordshire by incorporating villages like Warborough, Dorchester-on-Thames, and Shillingford into a Greater Oxford authority. I welcomed the Government's decision last week to review plans for Local Government Reorganisation. There is a need for clarity on how long the review will take and for reassurance that it will be a proper rethink - to that end I am currently writing to Angela Raynor (the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government) to ensure that residents' specific concerns about inclusion in the Greater Oxford Authority are on record if the proposals for a three unitary model return in future.

# Horspath Parish Council

Councillors would like to welcome Mr John Underdown as a new Councillor for Horspath Parish Council after being co-opted in August 2026. **The refurbishment of the village hall** project is still on-going and we are currently waiting for the decision from the Planning Officer at South Oxfordshire District Council regarding the planning application that was submitted. **Planning permission** for the new brick built bus shelter has now been granted and quotations will be sought to build the new shelter. **A request has been made** to Oxfordshire County Council Highways Department for "Pedestrian Walking" signs to be installed along Gidley Way and Cuddesdon Road where there are no footpaths. **Councillors have agreed** the locations for three speed surveys to be carried out in the village. **Horspath Parish Council has written to the Freedom Group** and has requested a meeting to discuss the complaints received and the concerns of residents with regards to the use of Sandy Lane, and is awaiting a reply. Oxfordshire County Councillor Tim Bearder is also investigating the complaints. **Several complaints** from residents have been received with regards to vehicles parking at Gateley. This has been reported to South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council who are exploring options for this piece of land. **South Oxfordshire District Council** will be carrying out a deep clean in the village from 29th October – 2nd November 2026. Councillors requested that Cuddesdon Road, Gidley Way, Butts Road, Church Road and all pavements around the village be included. **All of the old play area equipment** has been removed and disposed of. Thanks to Mr O'Brien for organising the clearance. **Horspath Parish Council is looking to appoint a Warden** to carry out regular inspections of the Wildlife Conservation Area and to keep the walkways clear. For more information please contact the Clerk: **A letter of concern** will be sent to Thames Water with regards to the frequent water leaks in the village which is causing disruptions to residents. **The External Audit** has now been completed and the details are available to view on the website. www.horspathparishcouncil.org
**Local Government Reorganisation** – The Government has announced that it will review its Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) decisions across England. Do you live in Oxfordshire and are you struggling to afford your home oil heating costs?

The Oxfordshire Crisis Support Scheme might be able to help you.

Oxfordshire Crisis Support Scheme | Oxfordshire County Council
If you have any questions, please contact the Crisis Support Team:
Phone: 01865 804171
Email: RSSOxfordshire@necsws.com
Webpage: Oxfordshire Crisis Support Scheme | Oxfordshire County Council

Residents who might not be eligible for oil heating financial support through the Oxfordshire Crisis Support Scheme can still seek advice from the friendly team at Better Housing Better Health. The team can help to support you with things

such as a free warmth and wellbeing assessment for your home, advice on what other fuel grants are available, energy saving tips etc.

You can reach the Better Housing, Better Health by:

Phone: 0800 107 0044 Email: bhbh@nef.org.uk Web: www.bhbh.org.uk

For any other cost-of-living enquiries, please contact the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Council Community Hub. The team is here and happy to help.

Phone: 01235 422600 option 3

Email: Communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk

The Parish Council is looking for contractors from all trades in the village who would like to register their details with the Council for any maintenance work required in the village, who would be willing to provide a quotation for works as and when required. If you would like to register, please email your details to the

Clerk:- clerk@horspathparishcouncil.org

If any resident wishes to raise issues with Horspath village please contact Hayley Kogel, Clerk to HPC via email - clerk@horspathparishcouncil.org .

**Please note**:- Horspath Parish Council will not take any further action on correspondence that is sent anonymously.

## Horspath Stone Pit Charity

The next meeting of Horspath Stone Pit Charity will be held on Wednesday 30th September 2026 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

The next meeting will be held in December 2026 and the closing date for applications to be considered is 1st December 2026.

No further grants have been issued since the last meeting in June 2026.

Trustees would like to remind all residents who are successfully awarded a grant that receipts must be provided to the value of the grant within 3 months of receipt. Failure to provide a receipt to confirm how the grant has been spent, will result in no further grants being awarded.

## *More Extracts from 'Around the Countryside with S.P.B. Mais Published by Bradley Press. Circa 1955*

### The One Ambition

Perhaps it is easier to love children in Horspath than in other places. As an ex-schoolmaster I do not always love children, but I found the children in Horspath Junior School very much to my liking. They were very cheerful, orderly, clean and well-dressed. I asked those boys who were going to be farmers to put up their hands.

"Why," I asked one small urchin, "are you going to be a farmer?"

His eyes shone. "Because I want to be," he said.

That seemed to be as good a reason as any. Who in his right senses ever really wants to work on a conveyor belt?

The Headmistress, Mrs Weeks, a very enterprising lady from Sussex pushed under my nose the current issue of 'The Stockbroker' and 'Farmers Weekly'.

"This is the sort of literature they like," she said.

"No horror comics?" "No horror comics!"



**School Picture 1955**

**Greta Margaret Beckhelling (1936 – 2026)**



In 1958 Horspath CE Primary School celebrated its centenary year and it was in that year Greta Beckhelling began her teaching career at the school.

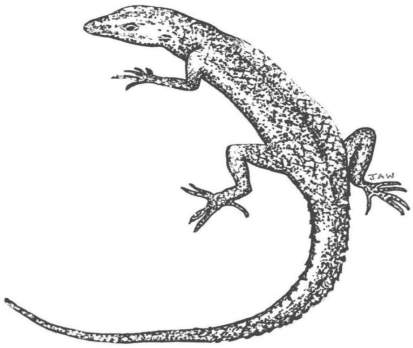
The Headteacher then was Mrs Kathleen Weeks. Greta subsequently served under Mr Salmon, Mr Sharmon, Mr Atkinson and for the last two years of her career I was Headteacher. During that 48 year period she taught hundreds of Horspath children. She was strict and could be stern but she was a passionate advocate for children's reading and their learning in general. She loved nature and was a driving force behind the creation of a pond and wild area in the school grounds. She also loved arts and crafts and I particularly remember the many examples of her screen prints around the classrooms. I worked alongside her as a teacher in the infant classes for three years before I became Headteacher. She was a kind, loyal and supportive Deputy Headteacher. I remember our animated discussions on the ridiculous demands of education officials who had clearly never met an actual child. I also recall a wonderful afternoon when she had been required to test children on the concept of floating and sinking and all the pieces of wood had sunk!! Doug Atkinson, Greta and I shared many a laugh and I always remember if he was giving Greta's name on the telephone he would say "Beck as in stream, Hell as in high water and Ing as in sing".

Greta retired in 1996 and enjoyed worldwide travel adventures, crafting, walking her dog and living a full life to the very end with family and close friends.

Lorraine Kingsman

*There is a 'MuchLoved' donations page for Greta Beckhelling with donations going to a local charity ARCh – Assisted Reading for Children.*

# Look out for … Reptile hibernation



Three of the UK's six species of reptile (snakes and lizards) can be found on Shotover:

- Common Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*)
- Slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*), which
- looks like a snake but is a legless lizard
- Grass Snake (*Natrix helvetica*).

Reptiles are "cold-blooded", which means they can't maintain their body temperature internally as do mammals and birds. The advantage is a slow metabolism, so they can survive for long periods with very little food. However, it also means they can't tolerate sub-zero temperatures, so they need to hibernate during the colder months. After hunting and reproducing during spring and summer, in autumn reptiles begin searching for a place to hibernate (known as "hibernacula"). This can be any place that will remain dry (but with enough dampness to prevent dehydration), frost-free and safe from predators throughout the winter. Unused mammal burrows, cavities in rotting tree stumps and piles of wood are common hibernacula. While sightings are less common in Autumn, you still might see lizards basking in weak sunshine on mild October days. If you see reptiles or possible hibernacula on Shotover, it's best not to disturb them. Safe overwintering sites are essential for their survival, and disturbance during hibernation can be fatal.

**Did you know?** When temperatures fall, reptiles become sluggish, and even their eyesight becomes poorer in colder weather.

*Compiled by Shotover Wildlife (shotover-wildlife.org.uk), an independent community organisation, founded to research and communicate the importance of Shotover's wildlife. Illustration by Jacqueline Wright.*



# St Giles

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Many thanks

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**Letter from the Editor**

Many thanks again to all our contributors and business sponsors for making this magazine possible and with the help of the Stone Pit Trustees. When I look at other village magazines, many crowded with adverts, I realise how lucky we are to have this support which enables us to fill our editions with lots of articles and pictures which I hope keeps you in touch with what goes on in our village.

Our small dedicated team still needs you to send us things which you would like to share with everyone living here, including stories, achievements and of course, photographs. As our publication continues to expand and diversify we are looking for someone to join us and get involved in some way in its production and content. We only meet in person every couple of months using email as our main form of communication….. So please consider joining us; just send an email so we can arrange to have a chat and hopefully become part of our team. J

**thehorspathmagazine@gmail.com**

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