

Tithe Farm and Ladygrove Residents Association (TFLRA)

Autumn 2019



WELCOME - What a mixed bag of weather it's been so far this year with our summer months comprising of a hot humid period, thunder and lightning, downpours and high winds - but just typical British weather. A big thank you to all who contributed a £1 to this year's newsletter subscription in June, and a special thanks again to those who gave extra. Without all your help we wouldn't be able to run this newsletter, which we hope helps to bring the community together with local news in your area.

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday



Hello??? **OUR PHONE NUMBER – AN APOLOGY** - Last time we asked people to let us know if they were having problems with their post but, oh dear, we hadn't noticed that our phone had died. We know of at least one person who tried unsuccessfully to contact us by phone. Apologies to him and to anyone else who found that the number was dead. We have had to get another sim card and a new number which is now 07856 869 335.



PROBLEMS WITH THE POST - And to follow up the article last time about problems with the post, we are told that Royal Mail managers (at the Abingdon office, for example) are advised to steer complaints towards the Royal Mail customer service. There appears to be two phone numbers for this - 0345 774 0740 and 0345 722 3355. You'll probably get a standard answer from them but we can only hope that if a number of complaints are made about a certain area, then alarm bells might start to ring.



THIS SUMMER'S LAVENDER - For some of us, it has been a great pleasure to walk around our roads and see how many front gardens have lavender bushes. These bushes have done very well this summer, looking and smelling wonderful. And usually being visited by great numbers of bees.



MASEFIELD CRESCENT PLAYING FIELD - Most families will have discovered the new zip wire at the top of the Masefield Crescent playing field. The Town Council reminds us that this is not intended for adults but for young children only. Tempting as it is, if us older and heavier people try it out, we will probably stick half way along - and not do the equipment much good either.



DOOR TO DOOR CHARITY BAG COLLECTIONS - Some time ago it seemed that almost every day brought a new charity bag through our front doors, asking for unwanted clothing. These have become much less frequent. While it is a way of recycling old clothes and avoiding land fill, there are still commercial companies collecting who masquerade as charities. Anyone concerned about

this could look at the Fund Raising Regulator's web site on clothing collections - <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/more-from-us/topics/clothing-bag-collections>



ST MICHAELMAS FAIR – The annual fair is coming to town!!!! This year it falls on Monday 7th and Tuesday 8th October followed by Monday 14th October for the Runaway Fair.

AUTUMN QUIZ - A WORD TO THE WISE - PROVERBS - Work out these well-known proverbs and sayings from the initial letters. All words are in capitals except the small words ie 'a' or 'an' which are denoted in lower case. Example: BOaFFT = Birds of a feather flock together. Closing date 19th October - drop entries into 18 Mill Road or email them to tfl_ra@zoho.com. There will be a small prize for the winner!

T M C S t B	
a S I T S N	
M H M L W	
a R S G N M	
W t C A t M W P	
P G B a F	
a B I t H I W T I t B	
a F I N I a F I	
a D M W C A a S	
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B I I t E O t B	
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D C Y C B T A H	
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H a L I B T N B	

SUMMER QUIZ ANSWERS AND WINNERS - So this was my friend's idea of a fun weekend – a country house with the opportunity to try all kinds of sports. She clearly hadn't read my Facebook proFILE Yet. I had always found sports an or**DEAL**, been forced to **PLAY** Rounders and tennis at school. In both sports I had hopefully stuck **MY ARM OUT**. However, I never managed to connect with the ball, but she was **veRY DE**termined, clearly meaning to **stand OVER** me until I agreed. She said there was an outdoor **POOL** – Even worse! She had also invited her brother and two of his friends **S AND OWN**ers of a shiny sports car, a popu**LAR NEAR**ly new model. They had even brought their **i-PADS TO Work** with during the weekend. Maybe they weren't so keen on sports either. We had each booked a **SEAT ON** the train and there was the Uber ca**B RIGHT ON** time, to take us to the station. We arrived with **OVER** half an hour to spare, and I wondered what it was **WORTH IN Gold** to be struck down by a sudden illness. We arrived at this rather pretty country house and were allotted a small attic room, about **TEN BY** twelve I guessed. From the window I spotted a secluded summerhouse in the garden. On investigation, I discovered it contained **WICK**er chairs, a shelf of novels and a pile of board games. Perfect! I felt a bit **selfISH GUAR**ding the door, but soon one person, then another sneaked in. Fellow sports haters! Nobody seemed to notice, and we spent a lovely, quiet weekend, a small num**BER, WICK**edly breaking the rules.



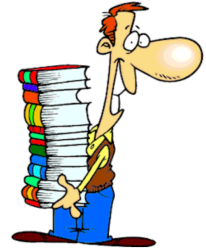
The winners this time were 'The Seamonsters' of Orpwood Way, who found every one of the seaside towns! We don't know how they did it – most people found they were missing at least 2 or 3. Many congratulations. They win a small prize.



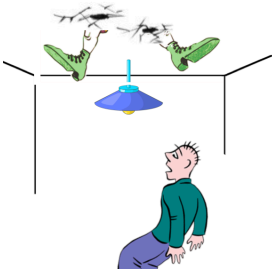
CROSSING ON THE FARINGDON ROAD - In place at last! More than a year after we first heard that this was planned, there is now a pedestrian crossing across the Faringdon Road. We understand this was funded by Abingdon School as their playing fields are across the road from the main school buildings. Nevertheless, this new safety measure will also be much appreciated by pupils (and their parents) from our estates who walk to John

Mason and Fitzharrys Schools.

FREEGLE - We mentioned this a few years ago when it was known as Vale of White Horse FreeCycle. Now called Freegle and with a much-improved website but their aims remain the same - keeping useful items out of landfill and discouraging waste as much as possible. They say: *"Please don't throw your old stuff away! Someone, somewhere may still find it useful. If you live in our group area please join up and offer it to our members. All items offered must be given away for free"*.



Have a look at <https://www.ilovefreegle.org/explore/ValeWhiteHorse-Freegle> for more details.



ASBESTOS - We were contacted by a Tithe Farm resident who asked if we knew if the Artex textured ceilings in our houses contained asbestos, as he had hoped to do some work on the ceiling. The answer was that no-one we asked knows for certain if this is the case, but it is very likely that there will be some asbestos present. The website of the Asbestos Information Centre (<https://www.aic.org.uk/>) points out that one of the key uses for asbestos was in textured coatings, like Artex, which were used to create decorative finishes on ceilings and walls, common in the 1970s and 1980s.

Because people are now aware of the hazards of disturbed asbestos, its use has been banned for a couple of decades but it can still be found around the older home especially in insulation materials as well as ceiling coverings. Does anyone have any definite information about our Artex textured ceilings? The only information we could give the resident was to suggest he call in a specialist firm for an assessment of the ceiling before he did any work up there.

AND THAT OLD PROBLEM AGAIN..... - Concern has been expressed again about occasional dog fouling on our verges and grass areas. The vast majority of people are very careful and pick up after their dog. But nasty offerings can still be seen in some areas. As many people are aware, the reason for concern about this is that some dogs can carry the parasite *Toxocara Canis* in their gut – this parasite lays eggs that are released via the dog's faeces. Apparently, the eggs can stay active in soil long after the mess itself has been washed away in the rain. Contact with the eggs can infect a human with toxocariasis – a very serious condition which can lead to blindness. A rare condition, yes, but one resident knows of someone to whom this has happened.



THE POPLARS - At the time of writing, no work has begun on The Poplars. By the time of reading this article, however, The Poplars may be well on the way to being demolished. The Vale did give planning permission for demolition and replacement by a block of 8 flats. A number of conditions have to be fulfilled first, including plans for improving the sight lines to avoid danger to pedestrians using the footpath and the road crossing. Some

anxiety must remain about safety during the development itself. For the planning permission details, see P18/V3012/FUL on the Vale's Planning website.

ABINGDON'S REPAIR CAFÉ - This continues to be a great success. The next session will be on 2nd November at Christ Church hall, Northcourt Road as before and at the same time of 3.00pm and 5.00pm.





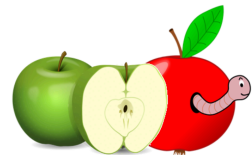
GARDENING BY MARTIN GULLIVER - Many plants, especially annuals and perennials, will happily self-seed around the garden, giving us free plants. Some are more generous than others! These can be thought of as weeds, but it is easy with many to pot them on and plant them where they are needed. The plants listed below are ones I have personally bought only once and then used the seedlings.

Stipa Tenuissima - a grass that seeds all over the place. Pot it on and it soon grows into a beautiful grass up to 2/3 feet high with feathery fronds. **Alchemilla mollis: Lady's mantle** - this has soft green leaves that look gorgeous after rain, and throws out fronds of yellow flowers. Very reliable and good in poor soil. **Mexican Fleabane - Daisy** - this is the one you see growing in cracks in paving and walls. Flowers for months. Cut back in autumn and it will come back again in the spring. **Hellebores** - these love shade and are good for colour in mid to late winter. The seedlings may take a year or two to flower, but pot them up and spread them around. Also good for containers.



Other examples include biennials (plants that are sown as seed one year to flower the next and then die) such as **Foxgloves** and **Poppies**, and annuals such as **Nigella 'Love-in-a-Mist'**. Other plants spread by runners - **Lily of the Valley** is a good example - and these can be dug up and moved. Similarly, **Snowdrops** and **Crocus**, once they have flowered, can be dug up, split and replanted around the garden. And finally, most perennials can be split up every few years, using the outer pieces to make more plants, and discarding the old centre clump. This can be done in early autumn or spring.

APPLE ORCHARDS- BY MAX THE WILDLIFE WATCHER - Whilst my apple tree in the garden is full of fruit, my thoughts go to traditional apple orchards and the bounty they provide in Autumn. Traditional orchards, although essentially a crop, can provide remarkable havens for wildlife. While modern orchards are planted with rows of low-growing, closely planted trees and short grassland, trees in traditional orchards were planted at low densities, were grazed with livestock and cut for hay under the wide canopy. Individual trees are long-lived and managed, and the ground layer is lightly used and free of chemicals. The result is orchard grassland that often includes abundant wildflowers, and trees with veteran features, including rot holes, split bark and hollow trunks - beneficial for fungi and invertebrates - that may be subtly coloured with a range of lichens. Birds can include Lesser Spotter Woodpecker, Bullfinch, Restart and ... in winter, Fieldfare and Redwing, while night time visits might reveal badgers and hedgehogs.



Why is it like this? Orchards were planted with domestic apple trees and other fruit and nut trees from Roman times onwards, and became a well-established feature of most farms in apple-growing country. The apples and the cider produced formed part of farm-worked wages. Other counties are probably better known for their apple growing, but our local towns of Appleton and Appleford on Thames indicate their orchard connections. Anglo Saxon village Appleford was known at the end of the ninth century and was part of the land owned by Abingdon Abbey.

Local places selling apples and apple trees are Q Gardens, Millets Farm and Waterperry Gardens. Check the website of Abingdon Carbon Cutters for details of their apple pressing days this year - usually held in the Precinct. Want to be more hands on and get fit as well? Contact Stonehill Community garden or your local allotment society.



OXFORD WOOD RECYCLING - Despite the name, this social enterprise is a local one, just round the corner from us on the industrial estate off the Drayton Road. Lots of us will have used it to buy reclaimed/waste wood at a better rate than for new wood in big stores. And they will cut the wood to size, ensuring there is no waste there either. They will also collect unwanted wood, for instance our unwanted shed panels, wooden fencing or leftover DIY wood (for a reasonable charge). In fact, anything that was once a tree - except trees themselves or garden waste. But they are not just a wood recycling store, they also provide jobs, training and volunteer opportunities for people who are often excluded from work due to circumstances like disability. Contact them on 01235-861228 if you want to know more - or just pop in for a browse, even if you don't have any need for a plank of wood at the moment!

BLOCKED PASSAGE WAY BETWEEN MABERLEY CLOSE AND FRANCIS LITTLE DRIVE

We mentioned this last time, since when the fence has fallen further and has blocked the path even more. The fence is 'privately owned' ie nothing to do with any council. Neither, it seems, is the wide, tarmacked path leading off Maberley Close (the part that is obstructed) and the smaller, narrower path behind gardens. We will try to find out who owns the main obstructed footpath but it is suspected that this may be one of the small areas never taken over by a council or an individual when the estate was built. Possibly therefore still owned by the original developer or builder, some 40 years ago. At one stage recently, we found that OCC had marked the obstructed path with yellow paint to identify a couple of sunken areas, so hopes were raised that OCC had accepted liability. We sent them photos of the fence and markings, asking if this was now the case. Their reply was that the yellow markings were a 'mistake' and they confirmed that they have no powers to take any action here. We have contacted Building Control at the Vale of White Horse District Council, and they tell us they have looked at the falling fence but they also say that they have no powers to intervene. We will continue to try to find a solution to this problem, but in the meantime, best to be aware of the danger of the heavy fence hanging over the footpath.



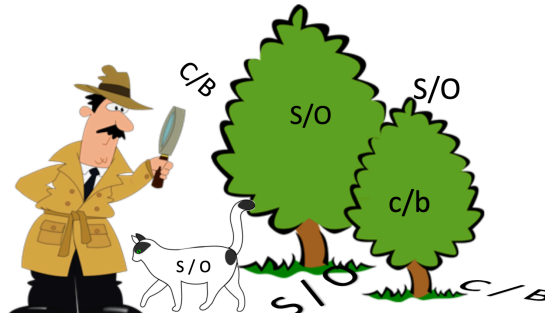
601 ... 602

A VERY OLD TRADITION - What 5 day journey down the Thames ends at Abingdon Bridge? Sounds rather like a quiz question - the answer, of course, is Swan Upping, which residents may have seen when the little group of rowing skiffs arrived here in mid-July. Led by the Queen's Swan Marker, the Swan Uppers travel down the Thames looking for groups of swans. This ceremony has been done for hundreds of years, in fact, the only definitely

known (partial) cancellation was in 2012 when the Thames was flooded near Windsor. The Thames' swans belong to the Queen, although rights over some of the birds have been granted to the Vintners' Company and the Dyers' company, two ancient livery companies from the City of London, (originally a sort of trade union, now mainly charitable). It can be guessed that the original purpose of the Swan Upping was to see how many were available to be eaten on the next feast day, but now the purpose is conservation and education. The cygnets are weighed, measured and given a health check. Apparently as the rowers spot groups of swans, 'All Up!' is cried out. Just where 'Up' came from, we don't really know!!

CUTTING BACK OF BUSHES OVER THE PAVEMENT?

A rash of yellow lines and letters appeared a couple of months ago after a visit from Oxfordshire County Council Highways team. Some of the markings are obvious - lines around areas where the pavement has broken up or has sunk. Less obvious were the letters sprayed in some places. C/B appears where bushes have grown over the pavement. S/O appears where softer growth, such as flowers or grass have grown over or are leaning over the pavement. A few other combinations of letters have been spotted. After some persistence on our part, we got more information on this from OCC Highways. They said: *...these markings relate to the footway having been identified as a reserve* site for resurfacing which would have required clearance of the lower part of any vegetation overhanging the footway (hence C/B - cut back) and the removal of any overgrowth from verges to expose the footway surface, a process known as "Siding Out" (hence S/O - side out). However, it has since been decided that this site will not be resurfaced in this financial year and it has been deferred for a future programme at some point over the next few years. Had the scheme gone ahead a letter would have been sent to residents in advance to request that they arrange for their hedges to be cut back but also advising them that if they were unable to do this then the council would undertake it. The verges would be dealt with by the council as these are part of the public highway.*



We are not sure what they mean by * 'reserve' site, but it is possible they mean that resurfacing may not happen in all areas of the pavements anyway. Obviously, OCC's plans are vague at the moment, but residents who have found C/B or S/O under their front bushes should be aware of what might be required of them in the future.



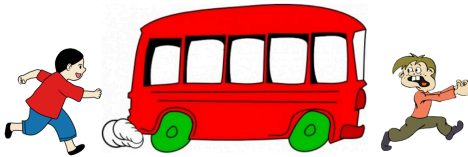
SCAMMERS - Scamming of all sorts seems to be constantly in the news. We often include articles on this problem, many of which have been published by the Thames Valley Alert (Police) team or other organisations. We have had warnings about the fake social media ad, eye catching discount adverts for items which have been based on recent internet searches or fake investment adverts where the goods and service never arrive. There are emails that pretend to be from an authoritative source such as HMRC, some looking very genuine. Telephone calls are made by fraudsters, also pretending to be from a bank, police or some service provider. It used to be just the fraudulent

cold caller at the front door but modern life has given the crooks many more opportunities to get hold of our money. Let's all be very cautious.

CALLSAFE – Following on from the Scammers article, a resident has reported that they have recently implemented a free feature called CallSafe onto their phone which is available for TalkTalk customers (please check with your telephone provider for their services). This stops unwanted nuisance and scam calls, and our resident has reported they haven't had one since!! Go to TalkTalk / Call Safe, where you add callers to your unlimited 'approved list' - All callers are able to call you, the ones on your approved list will get straight through as normal, and anyone else will first hear a small message asking them to state their name, then your phone rings and you're able to listen to the message which you can either refuse or answer the call before speaking to the caller. Most scammers don't bother leaving their name and just hang up - leaving you in peace and harmony.



Further details are here: <https://community.talktalk.co.uk/t5/Articles/About-CallSafe/ta-p/2204784>



X2 BUS SERVICE - Users of the X2 bus service may have noticed a new information display at the Drayton Road bus stop. This is supposed to show what buses are coming and when. Unfortunately, it appears that some of the X2 buses don't yet have the technology installed to send a signal to the information system. So, for instance, the

display will say the next X2 bus is in 30 minutes time, when in reality an X2 bus is just about to appear. So perhaps not to be relied on at the moment? We have also heard that there may possibly be some adjustments to the bus timetables in the next few weeks, but no information on this appears available at the time of writing. Good luck!!

ADVERTS - You can advertise your business. A full advert can go on the Blog with a short summary in the paper newsletters. £10 for residents for a year. We look forward to hearing from you!

- **Window Wise** - Supply and fit double glazed windows, doors and conservatories – Repairs undertaken on all double glazing – No pressured sales – Friendly service. Ring Martin for a free quotation on 07885571778 or 01235-559334.
- **Milk and More** – Steve our milkman for 20 years, has left. We send good wishes to his replacement.
- **Simon's News** - Newspaper home delivery, 7 days a week – telephone 01235-553001.

NEXT MEETING AND CONTACT – Please see Blog at <https://tflra.blogspot.co.uk> for the next meeting. For article contributions, announcements, advertising or if you'd like to come along to a meeting, email at tfl_ra@zoho.com or phone / text our telephone number **07856 869 335** to leave a message.



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