

# Tithe Farm and Ladygrove Residents Association (TFLRA)

## Winter 2020



**WELCOME** - who'd have thought this time last year what 2020 would bring - and I don't think many of us will be too sad to see this year gone and we turn another corner into the New Year! We hope the second lockdown wasn't as difficult as the first for you - at least it was shorter, though not as easy to get out and enjoy the weather as we did over the summer. Christmas is upon us and we sincerely hope you all get together with families for some of the time over the festive season. People were generous with money and appreciation of the newsletter when we did a late collection of subscriptions in September. Thank you to everyone who rejoined this year. A little bonus this edition - we've spread this newsletter to 8 pages instead of the usual 6.

**SOMEONE TO TALK TO... KEEPING IN TOUCH... KEEPING WELL** - 3 ways for you to keep in touch with someone, chat or ask for help:



- **TFLRA Telephone Chat Line** - Back in March, as our first shut-down loomed, the Residents Association distributed leaflets around our estate offering informal telephone contact with volunteers who lived locally. The idea was to help maintain social and community links at a time when our usual activities were rather restricted. As time went on, links were made between this informal chat service and the separate more organised practical help (with shopping and prescription collection for example) via Abingdon Corona Response (see article below). We have just been through a further shut-down and may well have ongoing limitations as to how many friends and relatives we can meet. Some of us may still be feeling quite lonely and cut off. If you feel that you would like to be put in touch with someone who lives nearby, for the occasional chat, please feel free to ring Diane Livesley (TFLRA member) on 01235 521261 or 07798877882.

- **Silver Line** - We have also become aware of a national organisation called **The Silver Line**, that operates a free 24-hour confidential helpline for older people across the UK. The Silver Line also offers 'telephone friendship' where they match volunteers with older people (based on their interests) and helps them to connect with local services in their area. The Silver Line, founded by Dame Esther Rantzen, DBE., telephone helpline is 0800 4708090 (free phone) and Website address [www.thesilverline.org.uk](http://www.thesilverline.org.uk).



- **Community Support during the Pandemic** - This is now organised by the Vale and South Oxfordshire District Councils. They say 'Help is available if you are struggling because of COVID-19 and you have nobody around to help you'. Help can be given with food, medicine and friendly phone calls, and they can also put you in touch with other community and volunteer groups or services. Phone number is 01235-422600 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4.30pm on Fridays or email [communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk).



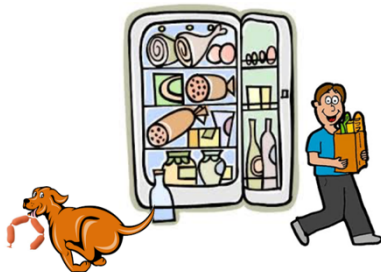
We do hope that you find this information helpful and that everyone on the Tithe Farm and Ladygrove Estate feels included in their community. We send you all our very best wishes.



**A HUGE THANK YOU** - Many local residents have worked really hard to clear up the mess left behind by the travellers a few weeks ago. Many thanks to them for their selfless actions in helping to improve the area considerably. They mobilised well before the authorities and it is to their great credit.

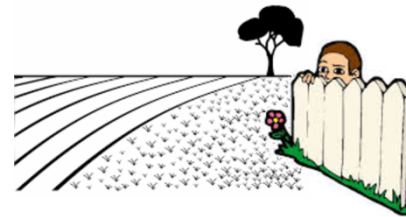


**THE TRAFFIC CONE HAS GONE!** - Although this is old news now, we were so pleased that this work was done at last, we felt we must mention it again in this newsletter. There had been a traffic cone in the middle of the alleyway between Tennyson Drive and Mill Road for at least two years, probably longer. Under the traffic cone was an open gully that had lost its covering grid. Complaints had been made to the County Council Highways via FixMyStreet and to Thames Water as apparently the gully was their responsibility. Now there is a smart new grid over the gully, installed, we think by OCC. And the traffic cone, for so long a feature of this area, has disappeared at last!



**COMMUNITY LARDER** - As well as the Community Fridge in Audlett Drive, Abingdon now has a Community Larder, found in Carousel Family Centre in Caldecott Chase OX14 5GZ. This is open on Fridays between 2pm and 4pm. Membership costs are £3.50 a week for individuals, £7.00 a week for families taken by a monthly direct debit with a £10.00 joining fee. For this, people can choose 10 (or 20 for families) good quality store-cupboard food items plus additional fresh fruit and vegetables, and other benefits. Supplies come from surplus supermarket food. It is not means-tested, its aim being to save people money and reduce food waste. Although run by local volunteers, it is powered by the charity SOFEA, based in Didcot. For more information, including how to join, go to [www.sofea.uk.com](http://www.sofea.uk.com) or ring 07377181472.

**THE FORMER SET-ASIDE FIELD** - Now known as the Drayton Field. At the time of writing, we have no more news about the future of this field, much used by residents and others for dog-walking or just having a pleasant afternoon stroll across local fields. Efforts have been made to establish exactly who owns this. It seems possible that it is divided into three 'parcels', each with a different owner. And the field may well be let out as a whole to yet another farmer. And finding out what the owners' intention for the future of the field may be, seems a very hard challenge to undertake. We hope that it will be very difficult to build on as much of it has 'scheduled monument status'. An excavation in the past has found evidence of Iron Age occupation, as well as Roman remains. It is understood that part of it was the site of a lost medieval village, probably abandoned at the time of the plague in the fourteenth century. Regarding access, the owner(s) would be entitled to remove the two foot entrances from the Drayton Road, but we believe that many people have used other access in the past. Technically, if we walk there now, we are trespassing, but then we trespass every time we walk around almost all the fields in our area.



**PLANNING APPLICATION** - As mentioned in the last newsletter, there was considerable concern among residents in the Tennyson Drive / Masefield Crescent area about the application to convert a corner house into 4 flats. Local residents worked hard to alert others to the proposal and many objections were sent to the Vale of White Horse District Council Planning department. The overriding reasons for objection were that obstructive parking and loss of sight lines at the junction of Tennyson / Masefield would result. Other reasons included overdevelopment, being out of character with surroundings and loss of privacy. Our own Vale Councillors agreed with our objections and Cllr de la Harpe spoke strongly at the Planning meeting on 11th November in support of rejection of the application. We were all delighted when the Planning Committee did indeed vote to reject this proposal, despite the recommendation from the Vale's officers that it be approved. Unfortunately there is always the possibility of an appeal by the applicant who has 6 months in which to do so.



**WINTER QUIZ - CHRISTMAS** - The answers are all words connected with Christmas. Once again, either drop your entry into 21 Mill Road - OR - email to [tfl\\_ra@zoho.com](mailto:tfl_ra@zoho.com) - OR - complete online for submission at <https://tflra-copy.weebly.com/quiz.html>. There will be a small prize for the winner! Closing date **22nd December**. Good luck!



1	Cockney rhyming slang for 'eyes'	
2	A smart, well groomed tree	
3	The gift is here	
4	Hollywood celebrity	
5	Santa: "What's the weather forecast"? Mrs Clause: "....."	
6	You spelled eephant wrong. There's .....	
7	A small, unimportant dessert	
8	Crazy, Christmas dinner amusements	
9	A war veteran wears them on his chest	
10	Prêt a .....	
11	.....oaks, .....wood, .....Willoughby	
12	Leaking out of an old sofa or cushion	
13	Girl's name is a seasonal song	
14	Does the bird really come from this country?	
15	What you hope your plants will do in Spring	

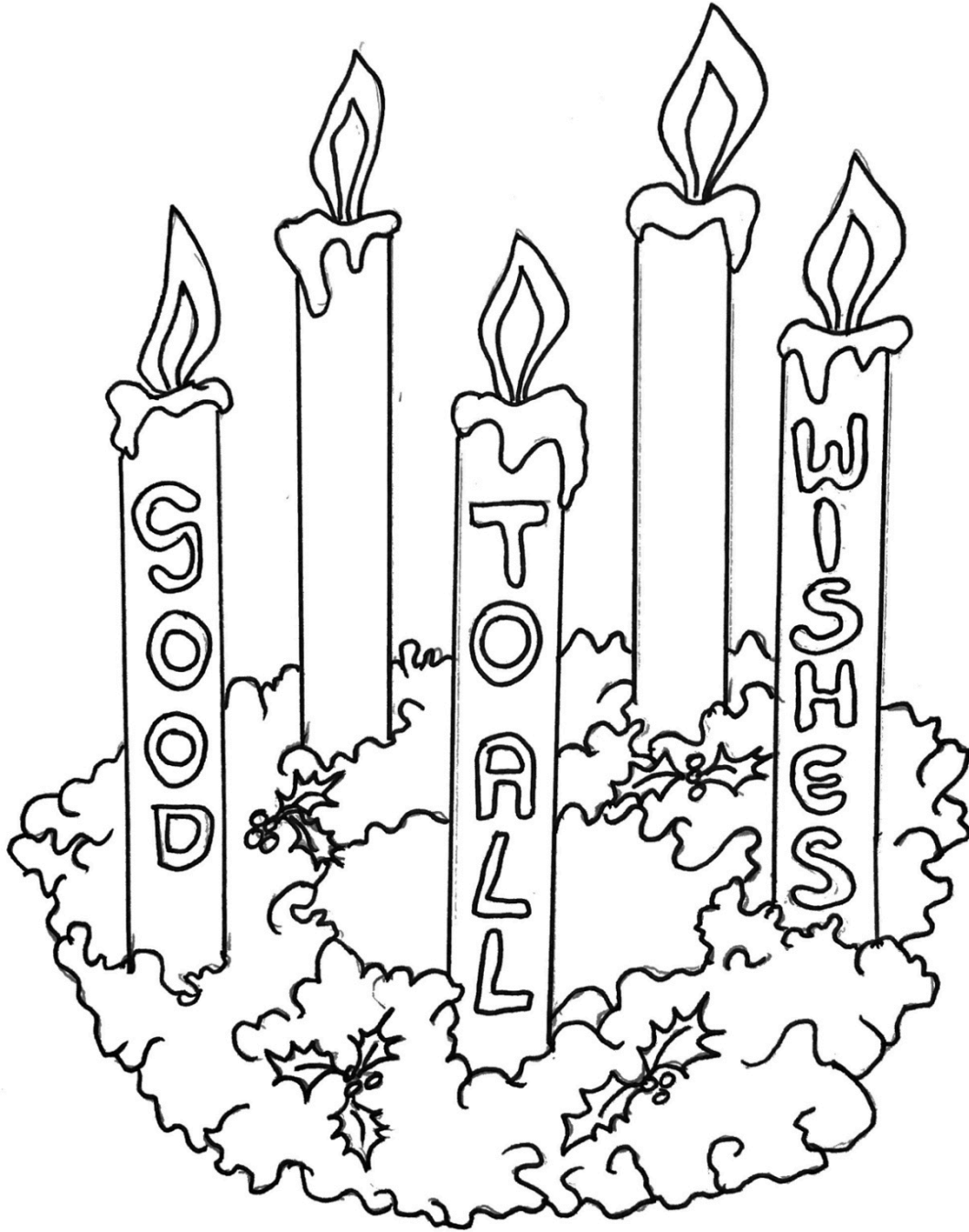
**AUTUMN QUIZ ANSWERS** - The autumn quiz seemed to have puzzled a lot of you but we did have a clear winner - Martin & Julia from Maberley Close who won a box of chocolates. Here are the answers (1) Keir Starmer, (2) Boris Johnson, (3) Grant Shapps, (4) Dominic Raab, (5) Rishi Sunak, (6) Michael Gove, (7) Pritti Patel, (8) Amber Rudd, (9) Emily Thornberry, (10) Jacob Rees Mogg, (11) Layla Moran, (12) Ed Milliband, (13) Matt Hancock, (14) Diane Abbott.



**RESURFACING PAVEMENTS** - By mid-December, the resurfacing of the pavements on our estates will be well under way. Work started in Masefield Crescent and the result of the first days of resurfacing left many residents unhappy. The new surface was churned up by tyres and footprints even though most people had complied with the Oxfordshire County Council Highways letter asking that the pavements are not walked / driven across for the first two hours after laying. It appeared to harden much later, sometimes with plants welded into the surface. Later work in other roads seems to have avoided these problems. Residents may wish to use the feedback letter to OCC to comment on the work standard.



**CHILDREN'S COLOURING IN COMPETITION** - This year's lovely picture of an advent wreath is for all you budding artists out there to fill in with crayons, pencils, pens, paints, stickers, glitter ..... let your imagination run wild!!! There are 2 categories - up to 6 years old and 6 years and over. There'll be a small prize for the winner of each category. Drop entries into the new address of 21 Mill Road and don't forget to include your first name only, age and contact details. Closing date is **22nd December**. You might prefer to stick your picture in your own window to greet your neighbours or passers-by instead of submitting it to us, but do both if you want - and if you can't duplicate this page for both choices, simply let us know (Contact details at end of Newsletter) and we'll bring another blank copy round for you - or you can now download another copy from our Website at <https://tflra.weebly.com/winter-2020-colour-comp.html> or. Good luck!!



NAME	AGE	TELEPHONE & ADDRESS
		<i>(not for publication)</i>





**TRAVELLERS** (*a resident writes*) - The September visit by some Travellers resulted in a considerable number of incidents which impacted on many residents, in their homes and when walking around the fields. There were, regrettably, incidents of threatening behaviour, serious fly-tipping, criminal damage and other matters and the Police had to evict the group. The earlier shorter visit passed without serious incident and many people felt that, if only the Travellers would take their rubbish away with them, there would have been no objection to the occasional occupation of these mainly unused fields.

Local residents sought to enquire of local Councils and the Police as to why the situation wasn't handled more effectively and to seek assurances for the future. Looking in particular at the Police involvement, this culminated with a video conference on 15th October with a Chief Inspector from Thames Valley Police, the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner Mr Matthew Barber (who is also a Vale Councillor) and some local residents.

At that meeting the Police apologised for a number of oversights and they accepted matters could have been managed considerably better (such as on-site presence, senior management awareness and lack of coordination). We were grateful to them for their recognition of this and the assurances they gave that lessons had been learned (such as any future visit being included on their daily management reports to enable quicker action, better communication within the Police and other services, more police presence on site and in surrounding areas). They also emphasised that they would wish residents to formally contact them to report any crime and that reporting greatly helps them to respond (and thereby help the local community).

To contact the Police for reporting a crime you can call 111 for matters which aren't an emergency. You can also contact them online and this web page gives clear information on how to contact them: <https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/contact/af/contact-us/>. If the matter is an emergency including a serious offence, someone is in immediate danger or harm, property is in danger of being damaged and/or a serious disruption to the public is likely, then call 999.

Except for very serious offences the Police are not under a statutory duty to investigate every reported crime. Quite reasonably they have to use their best judgement on what to follow up on what is reported to them. However by reporting every crime you enable the Police to very quickly get a sense of what is happening, where and how often. This can inform their daily neighbourhood team briefings and help them to prioritise local issues for greater attention/resource.

The Police have officers active in the community and they will gather and report back intelligence that they gather first hand. However we should not solely rely on that. Recent events showed that this isn't always as reliable as it might be and by reporting matters ourselves we are helping the Police to help us. It's not being antisocial or mean. It is reporting of a crime and for every crime there is a victim. We play our part by passing on what we know to the Police and also sometimes, contacting them again to gently enquire as to the progress that they are making.



**SOUTH & VALE RESPONSE** - We have had discussions with South and Vale District Council about their response to the traveller incursion. Residents will remember that they made a lot of phone calls made to South and Vale, often finding they were passed from department to department. South and Vale have acknowledged that a coordinated response would have been better and it is intended that a central contact point is set up should this very difficult situation happen again.

**CHRISTMAS / NEW YEAR REFUSE COLLECTIONS**

Friday 25 <sup>th</sup> December	Bins will be collected Tuesday 29 <sup>th</sup> December - Green / Food / <b>NO</b> garden
Friday 1 <sup>st</sup> January	Bins will be collected Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> January - Grey / Food
Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> January	Bins will be collected Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> January - Green / Food / Garden
Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> January	Bins will be collected Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup> January - Grey / Food - <b>6am start</b>



**WORK CARRIED OUT BY COLD CALLERS** - Following on from the recent visit by the travellers, some good advice was given by the local PSCO's. If you accept work from the travellers, then they will come back again and again, year after year to camp locally, because they know there is work to be had. If any cold caller knocks on your front door offering garden work, driveway repair, general house maintenance or anything else, it is always best to first check their contact details, look at their van to see if it carries a business name, make sure there is a landline telephone number (never just a mobile), ask if they have a business card or leaflet for you to take your time to think about it, and that you will be in touch when you've made your decision. Check out the business online or ask a family member or neighbour to do this for you. If they are a reputable business they will understand and will not pressurize you with the immortal words 'we are in the area today only'.



Understandably travellers need to work and earn a living like anyone else, but I doubt any of them have had any formal training in what they offer, so by refusing their work will also protect you from any serious unprofessional workmanship and damage to your property. Discouraging work will discourage travellers from returning to camp nearby.



**WHO OWNS AND WHO CONTROLS WHAT?** - We have tried to find out who exactly is responsible for the fields off Mill Lane, that is, who owns them and who controls them. The Vale of White Horse District Council is the owner of most the fields along much of the length of Mill Lane and surrounding the back of Ladygrove. But the 'control' and all the management of the first four fields off Mill Lane, at least, is now with the Earl of Plymouth Estates who appear to have a long lease from the Vale. In turn, we understand that the E. of P. Estates have let out the fields to local farmers, presumably on a much shorter lease.

There is one small exception, the wooded area around, and including, the public right of way path that starts in Nash Drive and emerges in Mill Lane. The stretch from the WW2 observation block to Mill Lane is owned by the Vale and has not been included in any tenancy. Just who owns the stretch the other way, back from the observation block to where the footpath emerges from between the houses in Byron Close and Orpwood Way, we just don't know.

**OUR COUNCILLORS** - We know that there have been quite a lot of messages sent to all our councillors recently, so a reminder of who they are and from which council. Our one Town Councilor is Eric de la Harpe. He can be contacted via email on [eric.delaharpe@abingdon.gov.uk](mailto:eric.delaharpe@abingdon.gov.uk). We should have two Town Councillors for our area but a by-election to replace the late Jeanette Halliday is on hold because of the pandemic. Eric is also our Vale District Councilor, along with Robert Maddison. We understand that Eric and Robert have 'divided' their ward, Abingdon Fitzharris, between them. Eric concentrates on the part that includes us, Robert elsewhere. Unfortunately this means that emails from our area to Robert appear to be mainly unanswered. For Vale matters, contact Eric at [eric.delaharpe@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:eric.delaharpe@whitehorsedc.gov.uk). And, finally, there is our County Councilor, Neil Fawcett, [neil.fawcett@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:neil.fawcett@oxfordshire.gov.uk). At one stage, the amalgamation of Oxfordshire councils seemed to be an option, but it appears that idea has been put on hold so our various layers of council work will remain for the time being.



**CARS ON WORDSWORTH/LONGFELLOW GREEN** - We were contacted by residents concerned about a number of cars parked on the Wordsworth / Longfellow green. They were concerned about safety and damage to the area. We passed these concerns, without mentioning any details of those complaining, onto Abingdon Town Council as they manage this area. We understand that the Town Council then passed the complaints onto the Police. The situation seems to have improved at the time of writing and it is hoped that there will be no more parking on, or driving across, this public amenity area.



**PATIO GARDENING** - (*Martin Gulliver writes*) - At this time of year, patios can seem bereft with the absence of barbecues, sun loungers, picnic tables and playground pieces. However the space can easily be filled with colour to take you through the winter. Winter flowering pansies and violas are available in abundance at the moment, and these will provide colour in containers throughout winter. Keep them fed and watered as necessary, and remember to deadhead them regularly to keep them flowering. Evergreens in pots provide colour, albeit green, but berries are also a possibility. Most small shrubs will suit containers, making sure the pot is about an inch larger all round than the pot it comes

home in. Check the needs of the shrub - for acid loving shrubs like azaleas and rhododendrons, containers using ericaceous compost are ideal if you do not have the right soil in the garden. Winter flowering heathers will look good, and should be trimmed after flowering to keep them spruce. Heuchera do well in containers and are evergreen, as are many varieties of grasses. As with any time of the year, buy what is in flower or berry now, and it will most likely last through winter. If you already have containers on the patio, it is a good idea to lift them off the ground with a couple of pieces of wood so they don't become waterlogged.



**WINTER WONDERLAND FOR WILDLIFE - THE HEDGEROW** (*by Max the Wildlife watcher*)

- Whilst most of the leaves may have left the hedgerow, they still remain a winter wildlife focal point. Insects are taking shelter as adults in nooks, leaf litter or old hollow stalks. Hedgerows remain a good place for sheltering animals, including hedgehogs sleeping in drifts of leaves at their base. Flocks of birds, whether UK residents or migrants including redwings, chattering goldfinches and long tail tits, take advantage of winter's wildlife larder of remaining hawthorn berries and rose hips. At this time of year, the skeletal structure is on display to indicate the quality of the hedgerow and its management. Have a good look now and then take part in the PTES 'Great British Hedgerow Survey' when signs of spring appear and all the hope it brings of warmer, longer days. Some hedgerows are remnants of ancient woodland and have a natural diversity. These hedges are recognised as part of a cultural heritage and historical record and for their great value to wildlife and the landscape. Our local hedgerows are probably a lot newer, but still provide local biodiversity and wildlife corridors for animals to move from the river to woodland copses. In 1946 there was an estimated 800,000 km of hedgerow in England, since then the promotion of intensive farming to feed the nation had reduced this number by half to 379,805 km by 1993. Fortunately, 'enlightened' politicians in more recent times have provided grants to farmers to replant hedgerows. If they are managed correctly, they can provide an amazing range of biodiversity in a small concentrated area. Increasingly, they are valued too for the major role they have to play in preventing soil loss and reducing pollution, and for their potential to regulate water supply and to reduce flooding. An excellent Oxfordshire example of quality hedgerow, is at Asham Meads (near Bicester) managed by BBOWT, consisting of mature blackthorn hedges where the elusive and late-flying brown hairstreak butterfly can be found in season. At the top of my bucket list of nature reserves to visit in 2021. For now, I will take enjoyment of some comfort food from the autumn hedgerow bounty, black berry and apple crumble. With a warm winter toast to the hedgerows.



**OUR OLDEST RESIDENT?** - When Mary Downing of Francis Little Drive was born, the First World War was just ending, women had only recently been given the right to vote and Edward 7th was on the throne. Mary is 102. She was born in Durham in 1918 and lived there until she was 14 when she got a job as a housemaid in London. Travelling alone to Kings Cross station, she met her new employer, identified by her the man with a rose in his buttonhole! Her employer's household moved to Marcham the next year and she has stayed in our area since then. Mary met her husband at Marcham Church, where she still attends every Sunday. They were married for 65 years. You may see Mary from time to time as she still enjoys short walks around our estates with her daughter, Susan. But she has had to give up birdwatching and ballroom dancing, her interests when she was younger. She also liked being taken around Goodwood in high powered cars and being a pillion passenger on motorcycles - we have seen a wonderful photo of Mary, dressed in leathers, on the back of a high powered motorcycle on her 100th birthday. How many of us could keep up with Mary??





**WILTS & BERKS CANAL** - (*Martin Whild writes*)....I have been aware of a footpath opposite our house the other side of an electricity substation, I walked the path some years ago and was surprised to find a WW2 air raid shelter on the route and what remained of a large concrete block. I chatted to a neighbour who claimed the concrete block had been scheduled to be blown up before the houses were built on Byron Close and Orpwood Way but explosives wouldn't touch it so it stayed in place! The path

follows the route of the old Wilts and Berks canal at Abingdon where it linked with the Thames, up Caldecott Road to Drayton Road, through the houses on our estate and out into open countryside.

The canal has been derelict for over 100 years and little evidence of a waterway exists in our neck of the woods, however if you continue on the footpath further west of Drayton and near Grove there are remains of a flight of locks (very overgrown) which in the past few months I have been exploring. Restoration of the old canal has been undertaken by the Wilts and Berks Canal Trust which I have joined and have taken part in working parties to clear undergrowth from sections.

What of our own section of this old canal? I decided at the start of lockdown I would ensure the historic route along the footpath is at least cleared of vegetation to give people the opportunity to walk it through our estate. Early one morning in the spring I set about clearing the 400 metres or so of the footpath between Francis Little Drive and where the path emerges near New Cut Mill.

The path is now "navigable", enjoy the route and cast your mind back 200 years or so to imagine when this route was a busy waterway out of our town.



**COVID GIRLS CHARITY CALENDAR 2021** - a group of local Abingdon people have produced a charity calendar for 2021. Each page is sponsored by and features an Abingdon business, and along with donations received too, 100% of all sales will go to The Abingdon Bridge and Abingdon Foodbank. The calendar is available now from participating shops in the town or contact Diane Livesley on 07798877882.

**GARAGE RENTAL** - Michael Ball of 31 Tennyson Drive is looking for a garage to rent on our estates. Contact him on 07785 308 488.

**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.
- **Jazzercise Wantage** - Opened on 7th March 2020! Jazzercise is the original dance party workout. We fuse dance cardio with kickboxing, pilates and strength training - set to the hottest playlists. Join the fun! All fitness levels welcome. Monday 7pm-8pm and Saturday 9am-10am. Loyd Lindsay Rooms, Ardington, Wantage, OX12 8PS. For more information contact: Tel. 07917 205372 or email jazzercisewantage@outlook.com Facebook & Instagram: @jazzercisewantage
- **Hair Beautique** - A locally run home Hair and Beauty Salon, with a friendly service. Appropriate face coverings and sanitisers available. Contact: Chloe 0794 679 4786 for further information and opening hours.

**NEXT MEETING AND CONTACT** - The meetings for the next few months are currently postponed. Residents are most welcome to the meetings once we reconvene in the Jephson Flats - but do check the Blog / contact us beforehand for when this might be. For article contributions, announcements, advertising or if you'd like to come along to a meeting, email at [tfl\\_ra@zoho.com](mailto:tfl_ra@zoho.com) or phone / text our telephone number **07856 869 335** to leave a message.

**Chair:** Anita 39 Masefield Crescent / **Treasurer:** Val 17 Nash Drive / **Editor:** Kay 36 Masefield Crescent

