

# Tithe Farm and Ladygrove Residents Association (TFLRA)



# Spring 2021



**WELCOME** - Well that must have been the strangest Christmas we've all had I'm sure, and hope that it went as well as could be for you all. Entering the winter lockdown has been a bit harder for many this time round as the weather hasn't been on our side, but just a bit longer and Spring is almost upon us so we can head out into our gardens again ..... and with vaccinations taking place now along with easing back out of lockdown, slowly we'll all be able to see people again. The weather has been a mixed bunch but typical for this time of year - rain, snow, floods. Again this year we'll leave the usual Spring sub collection of a £1 until the Autumn.



**THE ABINGDON BLOG** - Thinking about local news in the lockdown months, we see that our estates had a number of mentions in the always interesting Abingdon Blog. Comments and pictures were shown about our ex-set aside field along the Drayton Road and some about our little footpath to Mill Lane. In early February, there were more pictures of the flooded Ock Walk, and on Christmas Eve 'Backstreeter' had pictures of our Christmas lights on our estates. He commented that Medicott Drive had more lights per property than any other road in Abingdon. Congratulations to all on your impressive efforts.



**COMMUNITY FRIDGE AND COMMUNITY LARDER** - A reminder that both the Community Larder in Caldecott Chase and the Community Fridge at the Health and Wellbeing Centre, Audlett Drive continue to operate, in and out of lockdowns. The Fridge is currently open Mondays 5pm - 6pm and Wednesdays / Saturdays 10.30am - 11.30am. It offers surplus food donated by food suppliers, and is free and open to all.



Also open to all is the Community Larder, although that does have a modest membership charge. They also use surplus food. For more information on the Larder, ring 07377181472 or visit [www.sofea.uk.com](http://www.sofea.uk.com)

**CITIZENS ADVICE NEEDS VOLUNTEER ADVISERS** - Oxfordshire South and Vale Citizens Advice is looking to recruit more volunteer advisers to help out during and after the Covid-19 crisis. They give full training and say that 'You will need good listening and interpersonal skill, a willingness to learn and be confident with computers'. If you think you have 8 hours a week spare for the next two years or more and are looking for a volunteer role in your local community, contact them at [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/oxfordshire-south-vale/volunteer/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/oxfordshire-south-vale/volunteer/).



**THE POPLARS AND THE DRAYTON/BURTON PATHWAY** - Another year, another problem caused by the ivy obstructing the footpath from The Poplars fence. The pattern seems to be: Ivy starts to grow in spring. Ivy obstructs the footpath. Reported to Oxfordshire County Council several times. Eventually OCC gets the owner of the fence to cut back the growth. Next year it all starts all over again. This has been going on for years. The Poplars site has planning permission for demolition and redevelopment into a block of flats but it now appears abandoned. Does anyone know what might be happening here?



**BRENDA LENNIE 30.12.39 - 22.12.2020** - Brenda of Masefield Crescent sadly passed away shortly before Christmas. She will be greatly missed by all her friends and family. She was a very active member of the community, always busy, active, positive and happy.





**MORE NEWS ABOUT MARY** - People will remember reading last time about the wonderful Mary of Francis Little Drive, who was nearly 102. Mary celebrated her November birthday in style. She and her daughter treated themselves to a trip up in a glider. Next birthday, a parachute jump perhaps?



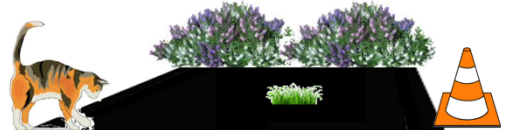
**OUR 'HELP YOURSELF' BOXES** - Back in the summer of 2020, a number of boxes with unwanted odds and ends were put out on people's drives with 'Help yourself' notices on them. On offer were books, DVDs, household odds and ends, children's toys and other items. It has been suggested that if people want to do this again in the summer, that they concentrate on one day a month when this happens. We can then walk around the estates with our goodie bags and find all those bits and pieces that we want but the owner doesn't. Of course, dangerous items, such as knives or dodgy electrical goods should be avoided. **Saturday 1st May** seems a good day to start (unless rain, of course), and then continue with the first Saturday of each month for a while. We will do reminders nearer the time, helpful to those giving and those taking. Please do let us know if you are interested in this idea - our contact details are at the end of the newsletter.



**LOCAL ELECTIONS** - We understand that local elections will be going ahead in May this year. Although this information is correct at the time we write this (in February), things keep changing so quickly that this may have changed again by the time you read this article in March. In principle, it will be the turn of Oxfordshire County Council to re-elect its members, the elections for the Vale and Abingdon Town having taken place in 2019. But in our Abingdon Town Council Ward, which is Fitzharris Ock, there should be a by-election as well to fill the vacancy created on the death of Cllr. Jeanette Halliday in 2020. We hope it will be possible to hold any elections in the Stonewater flats common room as usual - but, remember, we will be told to bring our own biros/pencils!



**PAVEMENT WORKS** - December to March saw the extensive work on our pavements, with the slurry resurfacing works. How did they do? Are the pavements safer to walk on? - yes. Do they look better? - yes. But there were issues. For example, we had been told that if overgrowing vegetation was not cut back, the contractors would do this work themselves. This did not seem to happen. There are examples of bushes being allowed to grow over about a third of the pavement. The slurry has just been laid up to the edge of the growth, which will create problems if the bushes are cut back in the future. Information on the internet indicates that the life of this slurry is only 5 -7 years. We will ask Oxfordshire County Council about what is likely to happen at the end of this period - and also if they are aware that weeds are already growing through the slurry in places!



**PARKING ON PAVEMENTS** - We have been asked to put in a reminder that parking on pavements is dangerous, illegal and causes many problems for pedestrians especially those with limited mobility, sight or with pushchairs. It is true that our street and driveway parking places are limited, especially for houses with several cars - but please, please think of your neighbours before you draw up on the pavement.



**CONGRATULATIONS!** - Congratulations to Charlotte and George on the birth of Sebastian, their fourth son. We look forward to seeing the Masefield Crescent football team in a few years time.



**SPRING QUIZ - LAST WORD** - In each clue, find the word that can go after all three of the given words, e.g. foot, snow, basket = ball. 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.weebly.com/quiz.html>. There will be a small prize for the winner! Closing date **11<sup>th</sup> April**. Good luck!



1	Flower, Double, Sea	
2	Head, Corner, Standing	
3	Air, Motor, Passage	
4	Over, Air, Red	
5	Bottle, Tree, Mountain	
6	Sea, Running, Under	
7	Butter, Tea, World	
8	Blue, Hand, Door	
9	Note, News, Tissue	
10	Boxing, Fox, Gardening	
11	High, Turn, Coffee	
12	Green, Full, Public	
13	Cloth, Ice, Baseball	
14	Door, Foot, Quick	
15	Water, Garden, Blood	



**CHRISTMAS QUIZ RESULTS (WINTER 2020)** - (1) Mince Pies, (2) Spruce, (3) Present, (4) Star, (5) Reindeer, (6) Noel, (7) Trifle, (8) Crackers, (9) Decorations, (10) Manger, (11) Holly, (12) Stuffing, (13) Carol, (14) Turkey, (15) Sprout.



**CHILDREN'S COLOURING COMPETITION AT CHRISTMAS (WINTER 2020)** - We had some lovely pictures from our children, whose ages ranged from 3 years old to 9 years old. We agreed that it was far too difficult to choose only one or two winners, so decided everyone was a winner. Everyone got a little prize, which we hope the children enjoy. Well done all for your efforts.

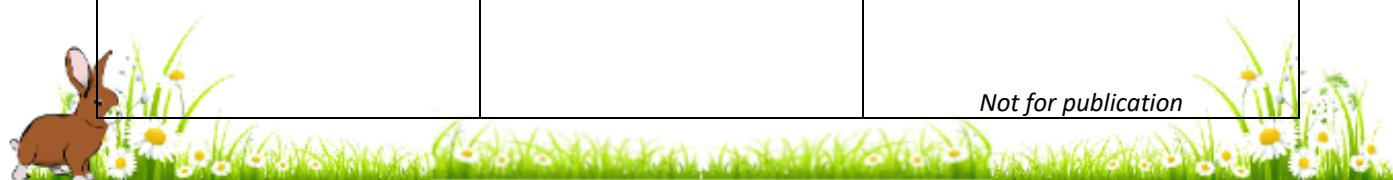
**CHILDREN'S QUIZ/SCAVENGER HUNT** - And here is something for children who would like a walk around our estates - a hunt for special points of interest. Can you find all of these? Drop your answers into 21 Mill Road - OR - email to [tfl\\_ra@zoho.com](mailto:tfl_ra@zoho.com) - OR - complete online for submission at <https://tflra.weebly.com/childrens-comp.html>. Don't forget to give us your name, address or telephone number and please say how old you are. Closing date **4<sup>th</sup> April** - and see if you win a prize!



		Answer
1	Which house in Francis Little Drive has scarecrows in the garden?	
2	There are faces on the front wall of a house in Wordsworth Road. Which house?	
3	Which house in Coleridge Drive has a little castle on the wall by the front door?	
4	Which road on Ladygrove has yellow Neighbourhood Watch signs on the lampposts?	
5	Which house in Mill Road has mirrors on the front fence / hedge?	
6	A house in Orpwood Way has a sundial in their front garden. Can you find this?	
7	How many balconies on houses can you see when walking down Masefield Crescent?	
8	What is the highest house number in Chaunterell Way?	



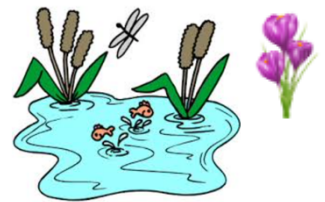
NAME	AGE	ADDRESS & TELEPHONE NO.
<i>Not for publication</i>		







**GARDENING** (*Martin Gulliver writes*) - We think of ponds as being large, filled with plants and with a couple of ducks for good measure. On an estate such as ours this might be over-ambitious! However much smaller ponds can be decorative, and more importantly, valued by wildlife. And much safer for youngsters! A wildlife pond can be made using something as simple as a kitchen bowl, a few rocks and aquatic plants like water forget-me-nots or even a lily. A sunny site is preferable.



Dig a hole a bit bigger than you need, and level out the bottom. Use sand if available to make it nice and flat. Put the bowl in and use a spirit level to make sure it's level. In-fill around the bowl to make it steady, then use stones or small logs for edging. Make sure there is an easy escape route if any poor unfortunate mammal falls in! Ideally it should be filled with rainwater, otherwise fill with tap water but allow it to stand for a few days before introducing any plants. Some people recommend adding water from an existing pond or stream - but try and avoid this, creatures will soon find the pond. I have had various insects, including dragonflies as well as a frog... and birds will drink too. Put gravel and a few rocks in the bowl and then one or two plants bought (when available!) from a garden centre. Be very careful to only use plants that won't grow too large for such a small space. Two or three plants is the maximum for a pond this size.



It is best to put in special aquatic plants. Submerged pondweed is also useful to help the pond stay clear. Keep an eye on the pond as you may find blanket weed developing. This can easily be removed by winding it around a stick, but leave the pile at the side of the pond to allow any trapped insects to escape before disposing of it.

Finally – sit back and enjoy!



**FIELDS WHERE WE WALK** - Walkers will have seen the two notices at the entrances to the former set-aside field off the Drayton Road, telling us that there no public right of access. One of the former swing gate entrances has been locked. We have no more news or information about the future of this field. The well-trodden path around the perimeter of the field shows, however, that walkers are continuing to use this field for regular exercise. The large cultivated field at the top of the hill continues to have its wide un-ploughed walker-friendly verge - wide enough for a couple of socially-distancing walkers and much appreciated. This cultivated field



is one of those we mentioned last time, owned by the Vale, leased by the Earl of Plymouth Estates and sub-let to a local farmer, who is happy to let people and their dogs walk there. The farmer's only request - and a very reasonable one - is that dog walkers make sure that their dogs **do not** run into the field itself in spring/summer when ground-nesting birds could be disturbed or worse. One of the pleasures of a walk around this field is to hear the wonderful song of the skylark, high above us. They are ground nesting birds and so are vulnerable to disturbance by exploring dogs.



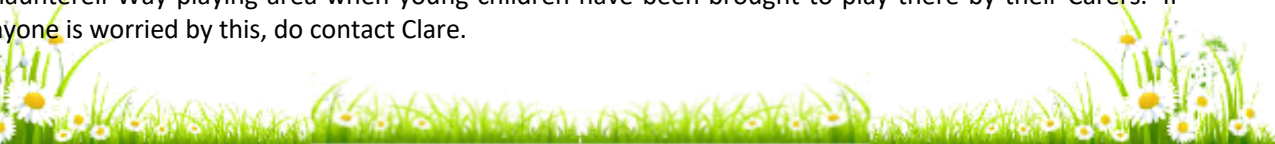
**OUR PCSO WRITES** - My name is Clare Atkins and I am the Police Community Support Officer that covers the area that is classed as South Abingdon. In the policing world these are the areas either side of the Drayton Road, Marcham Road including Tesco's and the Fairacres Retail Park. I work a 4 week shift pattern which includes earlies and lates covering the hours of 0800-2300. Every shift I include a patrol of the area paying particular attention to any key issues that I am aware of. I am part of the Neighbourhood Team based at Abingdon Police Station and our team covers loosely the area from Didcot Power Station to McDonalds on the Botley Road in Oxford. Our team currently consists of a Police Sargent, 4 Police Officers and 7 PCSOs. Due to covering such a large area I am unable to spend all of my time in the South of Abingdon but always ensure I am there as much as time allows.



If anybody would like to contact me I am happy to be emailed:  
[clare.atkins@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk](mailto:clare.atkins@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk) or contacted on my mobile on 07974 117527.



The TFLRA Committee have been told that there has been some conflict when young people are in the Chaunterell Way playing area when young children have been brought to play there by their Carers. If anyone is worried by this, do contact Clare.



**ABINGDON COMMON** - Abingdon Common was a large area of low-lying grazing land which once lay alongside the Marcham Road towards Marcham. Its eastern end is now largely underneath the A34 Marcham interchange and Abingdon's Tesco superstore. Most of the rest is still farmland, but now arable rather than grazing. An area which was formerly Marcham Common adjoins to the west, and Shippon Common was to the north, on the other side of Marcham Road.



Areas of common grazing land were very important in the past, because the members of a local community could graze their livestock on them. In Oxford, the right of the Freemen of the city to graze their animals on Port Meadow was recorded in the Domesday Book in 1086, and still exists today.

In medieval times, Abingdon Common would have belonged to Abingdon abbey, which owned much of the land around Abingdon. Later, it was acquired by the Duchy of Cornwall. Although grazing for animals was the original purpose, the Common was used for other things as well. Horse races were held here from 1812 to 1875, and were a major event in Abingdon's social calendar. The racecourse is shown on an Ordnance Survey map from 1875. It was a long oval course, laid out next to Marcham Road. The map shows a 'Grandstand', although it doesn't look especially grand.

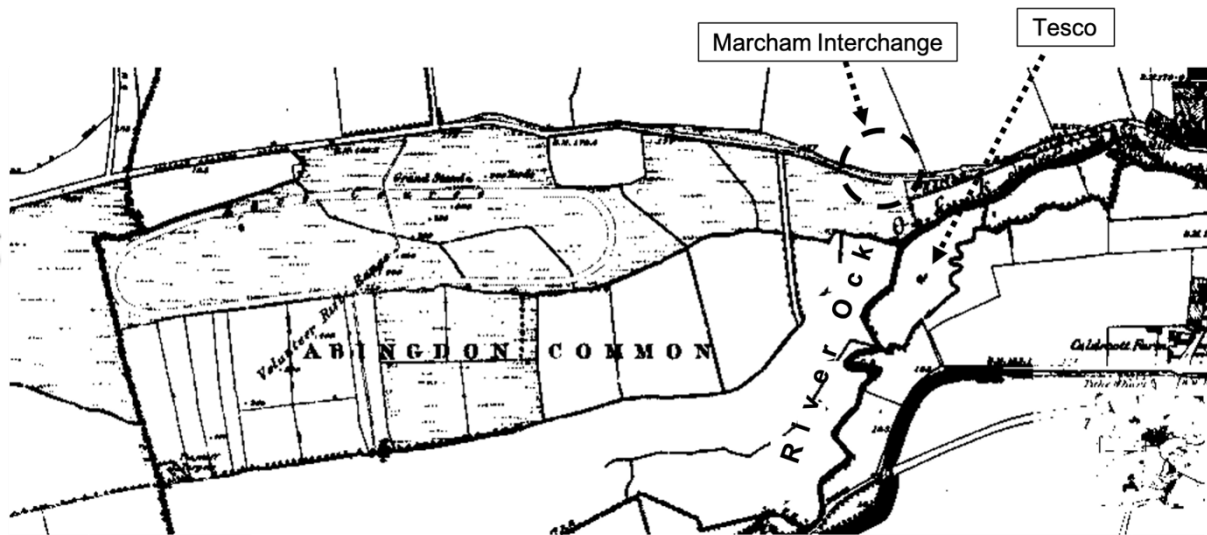


The same map shows a rifle range on the Common. It consisted of a target (and flagstaff) in the south-west corner, and what were probably markers at 100 yard intervals, running in a straight line towards Marcham Road. The 1000 yard mark was almost at the road. The rifle range cuts across the racecourse, so presumably they weren't both used at the same time! The range was probably used for training volunteer soldiers, possibly the 1st Berkshire Volunteer Rifle Volunteers Corps which was formed in 1859.

In the Second World War, the Common was requisitioned, drained and ploughed up to grow food for the war effort. This may have been when the common grazing rights came to an end. Today, there is not even a public footpath across the area to show that this was once common land.



Roger Thomas and Jackie Smith  
Abingdon Area Archaeological & Historical Society



*We've added some lettering to this 1883 map to give you an idea where the Common was*



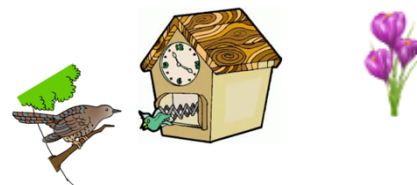
**BLOCKED SEWER PIPES** - We understand from residents in the Maberley Close / Francis Little Drive area that there have been some problems recently with blocked sewers. Apparently, when the Thames Water team unblocked the sewer pipes, they found nappies and wipes had been flushed down toilets. Their campaign message is 'Bin it, don't block it', saying that sanitary products and nappies should never be disposed of this way. And that even if wipes say 'flushable' - don't do it as they contain plastic which does not break down properly. Thames Water summarises this by reminding us that only the three P's and water should go down the drain - Poo, Pee and Paper!



## CLOUD CUCKOO LAND - WALK ON THE WILDSIDE (by Max the Wildlife

watcher) - If you suggested I would hear a cuckoo from walking around our area two years ago, I may have said you were in Cloud Cuckoo land. Wind back the clock to spring 2020 and lockdown daily exercise, I started to regularly hear the song either around Oday Hill or around Radley lakes. In busier times it would have gone unnoticed. And what an amazing sound of spring it is.

The male cuckoo returns from Africa and announces his arrival for a potential mate. The cuckoo is a dove-sized bird with blue grey upper parts, head and chest with dark barred white under parts. With their sleek body, long tail and pointed wings they are not unlike kestrels or sparrowhawks. They are summer visitors and a well-known brood parasite, the females laying their eggs in the nests of other birds, especially meadow pipits, dunnocks and reed warblers. The female will lay eggs in the nest of the type of bird where she was raised and there is a continual 'arms-race' between the cuckoos and the host: by the cuckoo to mimic the pattern and colouration of the host's eggs, and by the host to spot the impostor. Some sorts of birds spot the intruder, some don't.



My first sighting of a cuckoo (I can count on one hand how many times I have seen one) was on an outing as a teenager around the hills of Manchester. A large juvenile cuckoo was being fed by a relatively small adult meadow pipit. I was amazed by the instinct of the 'foster parents' to keep feeding their 'giant baby'.

The BTO have carried out recent research on cuckoos' migrations. Their research has shown that the British cuckoos choose two routes to fly to Africa for the winter. Welsh and Scottish cuckoos tend to take the Eastern route via Italy and more survive. The English cuckoos take the Western route via Spain and the Sahara which is more dangerous and only about 50% make it. Cuckoos are now on the Red List of endangered species. Hopefully with greater knowledge and understanding we can reverse this decline. In the meantime, enjoy the warmer weather (possibly including the dawn chorus in early May) and listen out for the lovely song of spring, from the Cuckoo.



**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** - Jazzercise is the original dance party workout. We fuse dance cardio with kickboxing, pilates and strength training - set to the hottest playlists. Come and join the fun, all fitness levels welcome. Currently meeting Tuesday and Thursday evening at Milton Hill House, Milton and Saturday mornings at Snells Hall, East Hendred. For more information contact: Tel. 07917 505372 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.
- **Oxford Kitchens and Bathrooms** - One of our residents is a director of Oxford Kitchens and Bathrooms, based locally in Wootton. They are entering the 42nd year of trading in 2021, with the same management that started the business in 1979. Their website is at [www.oxfordkitchens.co.uk](http://www.oxfordkitchens.co.uk) if you would like to know more about them.



**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

