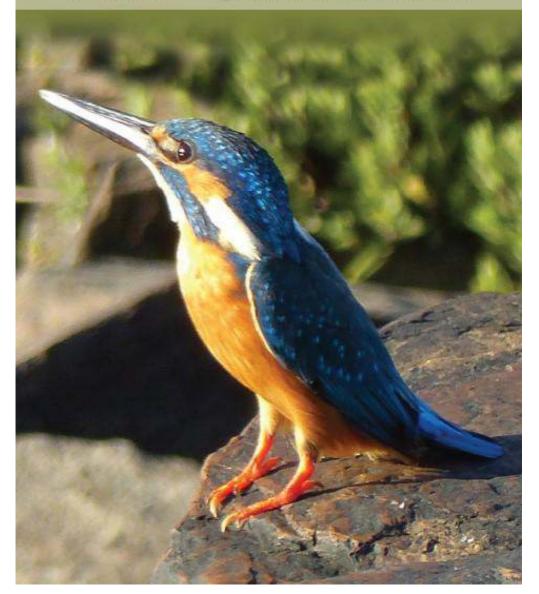
Valley Lewis 65 May 2019 For Avington, Easton, Itchen Abbas and Martyr Worthy





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WELCOME to the Valley News

The river that gives the Valley (and this magazine) its name is the narrative strand wending its lazy way through this month's News, with one woman's search for Ratty and the soul of the vole, reflections on a river walk last month and two to join in the future, and an expert's take on the riffles and scour holes of the Environment Agency's efforts to restore the river at Abbots Worthy.

As I hunkered down at the year's turn, it struck me that lanuary is an odd time to celebrate a new year! Surely Spring is the moment to have a new resolution and embrace the change that is in the air. Spring is now fully sprung, the indigo carpet of bluebells giving way to the canopy of beech and the cock pheasants sparring for their ladies' affections. The change is naturally paired with uncertainty, which can feel unsettling, but it also brings the possibility of moving forward with new resolution and pushing new oxygen over our gills. You could get out your garden fork and follow Tony's practical gardening advice, or strap on the trainers and sign up for a ramble along the river bank or enjoy any number of wonderful walking routes through our Valley. Why not grab life by the boules (see page 7), or treasure the WI who were a force of nature as part of the community litter pick, go to the opera and a choice of concerts, or put on your dancing shoes for the Barn Dance in Easton amongst many other opportunities.

We are all trying to support the environment, and I make a special plea to those of you who would like to give

our verges a helping hand to sustain the plants and

pollinators that are in such decline see the Adopt a Verge offer on page 13. Perhaps you too might aspire to be one of the winners of the Mayor's Award for those who contribute to the community - see page 39. Thanks to all those who volunteer and make such a difference, not only with all those events featured in the News but quietly behind the scenes. Everyone's individual efforts are the lifeblood that keeps our community the energised and vibrant place we all know and love. Thank you to everyone who sent in a choice of great articles - more please for next month's editor, Tony Gaster. Verity Coleman

Itchen Valley News

Chi (File

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Whats On

Sunday 28 April Worthy Park Tennis Club Open Day

1.00-3.30 pm

Looking to play tennis? Worthy Park Tennis Club invites you to our OPEN DAY at our courts based in the grounds of Prince's Mead School. Reserve your place in sessions for all ages and standards by visiting the Worthy Park tennis website or just come along and have a chat! We look forward to meeting you.

Jenny Sloan

Village Hall Annual Meetings

Wednesday 15 May

Martyr Worthy Parish Hall AGM at 7.00 pm in the Hall

The business of the meeting will include approval of the Minutes of the 2018 AGM, reports by the Chairman and Treasurer, the election of the Management Committee for the forthcoming year and any other matters arising.

All residents of Martyr Worthy aged 18 or more are entitled to attend and vote and will be very welcome.

Guy Green

Chairman, Management Committee

Wednesday 15 May Easton Village Hall and Recreation Ground AGM

at 8.00 pm in the Hall

Refreshments will be served from 7.30 pm, and residents of Easton and the surrounding area are welcome to attend.

Harry Smith

Secretary, EVH & RG Committee

Wednesday 22 May

Itchen Abbas & Avington Village Hall AGM

at 7.15 pm in the Hall

All residents of Itchen Abbas and Avington are cordially invited to this year's annual general meeting, which will take place in the Burge Room at the Hall. Please arrive no earlier than 7pm as our Hall will be, as usual, busy with other groups and activities! The meeting will include an annual review of 2018-19, with reports from the Chair and Treasurer, as well as the election of up to three representatives of our local community to serve on the committee as Trustees for the year ahead. We look forward to seeing you there.

Itchen Abbas & Avington Village Hall Management Committee

Thursday 9 May Easton WI AGM

7.15 pm in Easton Village Hall, with a talk explaining Tai Chi. Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month.

Also please see the article on Page 15 Ed

Saturday 18 May 7.30 pm Annual Choir Concert

The Itchen Valley Choir (formerly known as the Itchen Valley Choral Society) has its annual May concert at Romsey Abbey this year. Combining with other local choirs, its members are singing Benjamin Britten's musical narrative *St Nicolas* and two much earlier pieces, *Beatus Vir* and *Magnificat* by Antonio Vivaldi. Tickets from the Music in Romsey website.

Vernon Tottle

Also please see the flyer on page 21 - Ed

Wednesday 22 May 9 am -12 pm Children with Cancer coffee morning

St John's Church Itchen Abbas Help with baking and home produce very welcome.

Claire Hunt 779279
Claire I 23weston@hotmail.com

Saturday 25 May at 7.00 pm Concert at St John's Alresford

This recital brings together two clarinettists with local connections: Tony Lamb lived in Itchen Abbas during the late 1980s, while I



am a current resident of the village. Last year we met by chance and decided to celebrate this happy coincidence by arranging a concert together with our friend Roy Stratford. The very varied programme includes music by Mendelssohn, Liszt, Poulenc, Gershwin, and others, and features solo pieces, duos and trios.

Tony was Principal Clarinet with the orchestra of English National Opera for many years, and as guest Principal has played with most of the leading orchestras in Britain. He was also a founding member of the well-known chamber ensemble Capricorn. Tony has been a visiting coach, examiner and adjudicator at all the London colleges of music, and is a member of the Artistic Committee of the Park Lane Music Trust, which offers performing opportunities to talented young musicians.

I am currently on trial for the positions

of principal clarinet with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and sub-principal clarinet with Birmingham Royal Ballet. I have had works written for me by Graham Sheen, Julie Cooper and Tony Osborne and have travelled extensively in the UK and abroad with orchestras such as the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, BBC Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. I have recorded for film and TV with Cool Music and currently teach clarinet at St Swithun's School.

Roy Stratford enjoys a busy musical life as pianist, conductor, composer, and lecturer. His compositions and arrangements have been published by Oxford University Press and Faber, and he gives regular talks at the Wigmore Hall. Roy is conductor of the Woking Symphony Orchestra. As well as giving solo recitals, he has a regular partnership with the violinist Oliver Nelson, and has performed many times with Tony Lamb.

Do come along and enjoy our recital. Tickets at £10 are available at the door. Helen Paskins

Thursday, 20 June at 11.00 am Upper Itchen Valley Society Walk by the Itchen at Ovington

Roger Harrison, who owns a stretch of the Itchen at Itchen Stoke Mill, has very kindly offered to take a limited number of members on a walk along the riverbank at Ovington. This is a special opportunity not only to experience a different view of the river but also to benefit from Roger's wealth of knowledge on everything connected with his part of the river.

The walk will start at 11 am from Itchen Stoke Mill and parking will be available.

If you would like to join this small

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Save the dates

Saturday 29 June

Easton Summer Barn Dance

Contact Ina Williams 779465 and see the flyer on Page 26.

Saturday 14 July

Avington Car Boot Sale

Details on the Avington Park website

Boules

Martyr Worthy

The boules season starts in Martyr Worthy on Tuesday 7 May at 6 pm in the drive of Upper Chilland House, Chilland Lane (our grateful thanks to Jenny and Caroline). Thereafter we play every Tuesday throughout the summer at the same time, but each month at a different location in the village.

If you live in Martyr Worthy you are most welcome to come to meet your neighbours, have a drink and a chat and perhaps play. No previous experience of boules is necessary and equipment is available. We are a social group who enjoy a game of boules!

We hope that you can join us. For further information please contact John Prince on johnrbprince@gmail.com or Sue Savage suesavage55@yahoo.co.uk John Prince

Itchen Abbas

The boules season has started

Boules ... pétanque ... you'd like to play But where to go, I hear you say? Tuesday nights, we start at six. We can teach you all sorts of tricks

To shoot and point, it's always fun We do so hope that you can come Find our pistes at IAA Hall Two terrains for one and all Replenish yourself with nibbles and wine

Or a beer or two will be just fine We're a friendly bunch so we stick around

Until the darkness begins to surround Join us at seven or even later We'll be there, it doesn't matter Or come and see us for a chat We'd love you to join us ...

IT'S AS SIMPLE AS THAT!

We look forward to seeing lots of new faces of any age on Tuesday evenings throughout the summer. If you are new to the Village, it's a great way to meet people, We hope to see you soon. For more information or to let me know you'd like to come along, please contact me.

Jenny Sloan jenny@sloan-home.co.uk 07815 770810

Easton

We will play boules (petangue) at The Oak House, Church Lane, Easton at 6.30pm every Monday evening over the summer. All are welcome. Beginners can borrow balls and quickly learn to play. If you are coming along for the first time, please register an interest first by email to sj broadley@hotmail.com Simon Broadley

Valley Happenings

Lent lunches

For six Fridays before Easter, members of the local community have enjoyed delicious soups, bread and cheeses,

and each other's company, at various homes across the



Valley - or on one occasion in St John's Church in Itchen Abbas.

The main purpose of the lunches is to bring people in our four villages together for a simple meal during Lent, and incidentally to fundraise for a local cause. This year the magnificent sum of £2,330 was raised for the Winchester Hospice at RHCH Winchester, which is due to open this summer.

In addition to all those who attended



lunches, I would like to thank all the wonderful people who agreed to host an event. I hope that some of you who are reading this article, whether you have been to a Lent Lunch or not, may feel inspired to host a lunch at your home next year. You do NOT have to spring clean your house and there are always enough people to help make soups or clear up afterwards! Let me know if you would like to help. Stephanie Gretton

The biggest thanks to Stephanie, who arranged the series with charm and calm efficiency. Some of the funding for the defibrillators installed locally was raised at the Lent lunches 2018 — see the article on page 11 - Ed

Martyr Worthy Lecture series

The 2018/2019 series raised £8,252 for the Itchen Valley churches. The team of Joanna Lang, Gilly Greenwood, Liz Platt and Verity Coleman are very grateful for the invaluable support from any number of neighbours (special mention to Executive Chef Lucinda Ffennell!) without whom it would never happen. Here we are plotting the next series in 2020/21!



Annual Parish Meeting

As promised, the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 11 April was more fun than you might expect! The food was, as always, delicious and plentiful and the wine served generously - none of that one glass only nonsense from the bar staff. We then sat decorously on the banqueting chairs in the elegant library for the business of the meeting, thanking those who have worked for the parish in so many ways in the past and, in a few cases, electing those who have nobly volunteered to do so in the future.

Charlotte Appleby



Easton & Martyr Worthy Safari Supper 2019

Fifty five people enjoyed the Easton and Martyr Worthy Safari Supper on Saturday 6 April. The pleasant early spring weather helped us move around easily as we travelled from course to course. As a result we are delighted to say that we raised nearly £800 in donations which will be divided between St Mary's Church and Easton Village Hall.

Thank you to everyone who supported the event and particular thanks to Philip and Lucy Wolfe for holding the finale at their home.

Terry and Anna McGowan

Litter Pick follow-up

On a bright sunny Saturday morning in March, the residents of the Itchen Valley volunteered their time in droves to participate in the Valley's annual litter pick. Groups set off from Easton, Avington, Itchen Abbas, Chilland and Martyr Worthy. I have had the privilege of arranging and organising this event for the past two years, but I want to make it clear that this is very much a team effort.

Preparations begin some months before and would not be possible without many people helping. I particularly want to thank the ladies of the WI for providing the refreshments for the pickers who worked so hard. Every year the ladies of Easton WI prepare a variety of cakes and sweet treats to accompany the teas and coffees they serve. We would be lost without them.

Thanks also to Penny Russell who was brilliant in designing our posters, the members of the Parish Council who helped in much of the background preparation and on the day ran several of the teams of pickers, and the non-



council members who also ran teams of pickers. And a quick shout out to Princes Mead School who ran their own event during the school week in collaboration with us.

But really this is a big thank you to everyone who devoted their time that morning, picking up litter, supporting behind the scenes, helping to advertise and promote the event. It was a huge success, with an increase in participation and a lot of rubbish collected! Events like these really demonstrate our sense of community and how much we all care about this pleasant part of the world we are lucky to inhabit.

The slightly pessimistic part of my message today comes in the form of the level of rubbish collected. I was pleased to see very little real 'litter' on the stretch of the Valley I monitored. But I was dismayed at the level of 'other' rubbish - from fridges to televisions, car parts to traffic cones. It highlights a greater problem we face. The traditional food wrappers and



abandoned drinks cans have given way to larger and potentially more dangerous items. Dangerous for ourselves, but also to the environment. It is something we must all endeavour to monitor and report when spotted which I am sure we will: the devotion and dedication of the residents of our Valley over these past few weeks (as well as on the day) gives me great hope for our area, and also hope for the continued success of events such as these, which I trust will continue to grow from strength to strength. Thank you all once again! Alistair Ward-Boughton-Leigh

Martyr Worthy fishery walk led by Simon Ffennell

It was a pleasure to be on the Martyr Worthy fishery on a glorious spring day, and a privilege to hear Simon Ffennell, who has extraordinary knowledge of wild brown trout in general and this part of the Itchen in particular, talk about his stretch of the river.

His goal is to maintain a healthy population of wild brown trout. The upper Itchen is a favourable habitat because there is a healthy flow of water that filters gently through the aquifers in the chalk into the river. This flow is vital for the eggs and hatchlings



and for the balance of weed in the river and is carefully maintained, in part by management of the banks and the levels of river weed. He showed us a sample of the small aquatic life that occupies the bed of the river, with all sorts of invertebrates such as shrimps and bull heads, some of which will hatch into dragonflies, olives and mayfly.

There is the surrounding land to be managed too, with encouragement of native chalkstream plants, and Simon touched on the no till farming methods which are decreasing run off into the river. George Mann also gave us a



short explanation of the way that the water was managed historically to flood the water meadows to improve their fertility.

See also the report on Page 32 about the work on the river at Abbots Worthy. IVN roving reporter

Defibrillator Update



This unit has now been installed at Easton Village Hall, and is being registered with the Ambulance Service. Training and awareness will be arranged.

Easton Defib Action Group

The Itchen Valley Flower show – new beginnings...

Many readers will have been saddened to read in this publication that the Itchen Valley Flower Show, which has been held every July in Itchen Abbas for over 50 years, is no more. When we came to live here in 2003, this was a key summer event attracting hundreds of entries in all classes across the spectrum of flowers, vegetables, craft and cookery. It was also a social event, a chance to mix with fellow residents, fun for the children and a much enjoyed community occasion with a little healthy competition thrown in!

Therefore, the show's demise is felt keenly by many residents and I am proposing that we, The Valley Gardeners, give the show a makeover and re-launch it in 2020. As Chairwoman of The Valley Gardeners, I have sounded out members of my

hard-working committee and the 120 members of the Club on their thoughts, feelings and ideas surrounding this idea. With a couple of exceptions, I have received enthusiastic support for the idea as well as offers of help to organise the event. There have also been many promises of entries into the classes at the show, without which, of course, there would be no show!

So now I would like to ask you, the residents of the Itchen Valley for your support (or not!) and if you have any ideas that would help make the new show a roaring success once again. We are planning to form a sub-committee of The Valley Gardeners to organise and run the show. This will include a few of our own committee members but I am hoping to recruit some Itchen valley residents who would like to contribute to putting on this important local event. Please let me know if you have any interest in doing this.

There will be changes to the existing show of course. One being considered is the timing of it. Many think holding the show on the second Sunday in September would be good. The children are back at school and there would be lots of cropping vegetables and fruit available but we cannot clash with the Alresford Show which is the first Saturday of September. Another possible time is the very end of June, before school summer holidays begin. But frankly, any time of year has its competing events and problems of its own so we are keen to know what you think about the possible timing of the show. It might also be interesting to alternate the show date annually between the June and September dates. This would mean different flowers and produce each year and this variety would appeal to a wider cross section

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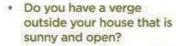
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...and help bring back wildflowers to the Itchen Valley



- Would like to improve it for wildflowers and wildlife?
- We can help you with advice and a free kit!

The Wild Valley Verges group successfully bid for Boomtown charity funding via Itchen Valley Parish Council. We can therefore offer a verge management starter kit.

- A spring rake to rake off the 'arisings' or cuttings every time the verge is cut by the contractors
- A packet of yellow rattle (Rhinanthus minor) seed to plant in gaps in the autumn
- A green garden waste bag from WCC (if needed) for the cuttings.

Research shows that reducing fertility by mowing carefully and collecting the cuttings reduces soil fertility to the benefit of wild flowers.

VERGES

Adopted verges should be at least 5m long and 2m wide and not shaded by trees. You could team up with your neighbours to make even more impact or adopt a verge/open space where you regularly walk.

Anyone who is would like to participate should:

- Register their interest and the location of their verge(s) by emailing wildvalleyverges@ gmail.com
- Come to a training/information session on Saturday 22nd June from 3.30pm-5pm at Couch Green Recreation Ground where we will be handing out the kit.

There will be tea and cake!

Simon Broadley, Verity Coleman, Lucy Collis and Sophie Rogers

wildvalleyverges@gmail.com



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of residents.

We want to continue to involve our local children as much as possible. After all, they are the gardeners of the future and will be the custodians of the natural world, so I feel it is important to encourage them to grow food and flowers and have a healthy respect for our environment. So we plan to talk to school staff and thus encourage their pupils to enter even more classes than they do already.....and there will be some new classes to pique the children's interest!

We would like to simplify and change the judging system and prize giving so all suggestions on those questions are welcome! The new show will be less formal and more quirky than other more conventional flower and produce shows, to encourage those who are less confident about entering the classes. We hope to appeal to everyone in the Valley from the youngest to the oldest, from keen gardeners to those who grow just a few runner beans. It should be fun for all! If you are involved in any group which has a natural fit with the show – I am thinking here of Wild Valley Verges and the Martyr Worthy Plant Sale, but there will be others – please do get in touch so we can see if we can help each other through working on this project.

Although we are all time poor these days, I believe that interest in gardening is on the increase and this is borne out by the highest ever sale of seeds reported this year. Country wide, people are "growing their own" which is the theme of the RHS's National Gardening Week for 2019. Climate change, concern about pesticides and the health, quality and flavour of our food; all these factors are contributing to a rise in the wish to provide our

own food wherever possible and enhance our living spaces with plants and trees.

So please, if you would like to help with this project or have any ideas about new ways to run the show including new classes or categories, please contact me. If you feel you might be able to offer some help on the day of the show or even just commit to entering something in a class at the show, please do get in touch (see below). It would be such a shame if this enjoyable and cohesive community event really has gone for good. We at The Valley Gardeners are going to do our best to revive and refresh it but we need your help and involvement to make it a success! Thank you. Catherine Hahn 01962 779343 catherinehahn I @gmail.com The Valley Gardeners www.thevalleygardeners.com

IMAGE and the WI

We seem currently to be living in a society where Image is all. So many of us are urged to conform to what others seem to want us to be. whatever our age and whoever we are. In the WI we suffer from the same problem. Firstly our name does not help. Although it says who we are, the word "institute" sounds rather Victorian and is not perhaps what would be chosen in the 21st century. Perhaps the WI smacks of a homely group of probably elderly women whose life has been centred round the home - producing a Victoria sponge in a trice, keeping the house spic and span and generally fulfilling the image of the perfect little housewife.

Today's WI is a different beast. We are campaigners (involved with the

theWI

INSPIRING WOMEN

current topical issues – for example plastic waste and care in the community), we educate members in many subjects not only locally, but through our own Educational College, but perhaps most importantly we still follow the mantra of the founders by offering support and friendship to others.

So what is Easton WI? We are all of the above. Some of us can turn our hand to baking, sewing or other artistic endeavours, but that is certainly not the extent of our interests. If you don't want to bake a cake then buy one, and if the thought of making a curtain is daunting and of no interest there are many shops where they can be bought. However, if you do want to meet a lively bunch of women with varied interests, give us a try. We live in a lovely community. Easton WI, whilst giving much enjoyment to those of us who are members, could offer something else perhaps to others who hopefully can see beyond our conventional image. Besides our monthly meeting (usually with a speaker), every month we also have a Book Group, Craft Group and Lunch Club as well as occasional outings and theatre trips. Wherever you live, whatever your age you can be sure of a warm welcome.

Ina, Jean, Jill and Pauline

Local Residential opportunity

Seen In Northington Lane, March 2019.



Rob and Sue Harris

Our favourite dogs – No. 5 in a series: Rufus the Red



How to describe my best friend? The finest ginger fella a girl could have! He came into our lives nearly eight years ago aged nine weeks after much pressure from my then seven year old daughter - a guinea pig would not do!



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We loved the look and heritage of the Irish Terrier and although the breed can be challenging, especially for first time dog owners, I was up for it! He is the product of a champion Dad - Montelle Viscount Erhard and a Micheldever lass called Rosie. After many phone calls we were very lucky to find his litter so close by. They are not a common breed. He was one of eight puppies and has six sisters and a brother.

We have enjoyed having him in our lives every day since we got him and he is a big part of our family. Everything you've ever read about Irish Terriers is probably true about Rufus - he's a big personality in a medium sized body. He's always got a twinkle in his eye and although fairly obedient there is a wilful streak which means I have to be one step ahead, or try to be, even after two years at training classes! Stout hearted when out but tender hearted at home, he's feisty, adaptable, mischievous,





playful, funny, sensitive, sweet and loving.

I call him the ginger lamb - wherever I am he wants to be! He is the most wonderful walking companion - lively, inquisitive, strong. We are utterly devoted to each other.

Helen Smyth

Letter from the Rectory



Phew! That was busy. It's always a bit hairy at this time of year - Christmas soon morphs into Easter; and Easter week is huge for those of us in the clergy and those engaged in what we do in the church. In Holy Week before Easter we had a quiet, reflective service called Compline from Monday to Wednesday in the evenings, then on Thursday the Maundy Thursday communion service. On Good Friday there was Way of the Cross in Church Lane Martyr Worthy and the Last



Hour service in the afternoon, and then two services on Easter Sunday. Busy! But wonderful also. In the run up to Easter week this year we also had the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

at Avington Park (for which thank you to Sarah and Charlie Bullen). [See the report on P8 - Ed] It's a time to reflect on last year and also work out what we are doing for the future. We do need to think about the future because it is not at all straightforward. It is by no means certain that there will be a church in our community in 20 years time.

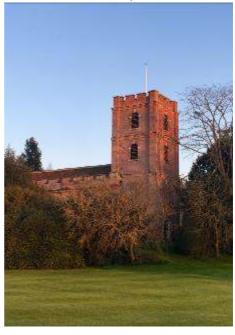
The rural church in England faces challenges. The number of paid clergy in England is in decline, from 9,000 to 7,000 since the year 2000, and the trend is likely to continue. A quarter of paid clergy are over sixty and the average age of all clergy (including nonstipendiaries like me) is also over 60. Not only that, but the number of clergy being made available by the Church of England for rural church ministry is also being reduced.

The Diocese feels that it should deploy its limited resources in areas of large population: in towns and cities, where often areas of population of 6,000 or more go without a vicar at all, rather than smaller areas of population such as the villages and hamlets like ours where the population is as little as 1,500. Frankly, there is less appetite for putting clergy in populations as small as ours without a very good reason for doing so.

We, as a parish, have, of course, gone over the last few years from having a full-time stipendiary vicar and a full time stipendiary curate plus two Licensed Lay Ministers, down to a post which is officially for a half time stipendiary vicar with help from one LLM. It's a colossal reduction in clergy. This has meant that we have had to reduce the number of services we hold over the combined parish to two per Sunday (from three). I know it's not what everyone wants, but it is essential, I'm afraid.

Furthermore, we have to cater for the differing styles of worship wanted by (in the main) different age groups. It is wonderful how so many parishioners have been willing to worship in churches other than the ones in their own villages and even to come to services which are not their preferred style. Thank you to all of you who do this.

But over the next 10 years or so the



Itchen Valley Churches

Sunday 5th May

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am Family Worship

Sunday 12th May

10am Parish Communion

6pm Evensong

Sunday 19th May

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am Valley Worship

Sunday 26th May

10am Parish Communion

6pm Evensong

Rector

Revd Alex Pease rector@itchenvalleychurches.org 01962 779845

Days: Sun, Mon, Tues & Weds.

LLM

Mr Gerry Stacey gstacey@easynet.co.uk 07554 438973

Parish Administrator

Beccy Clark admin@itchenvalleychurches.org 01962 779845 Mon-Fri, 9am - 1pm (term time)

www.itchenvalleychurches.org

St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy

St Mary's, Easton

St John's, Itchen Abbas

St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy

St John's Itchen Abbas

St Mary's Easton

St Swithun's Martyr Worthy

St Mary's Avington

Little Rainbows

If you have children please come and give Little Rainbows a try - it is a group for pre-school children (including new-born babies) and their mums, dads or carers. The children can play, do puzzles and crafts, we have a snack and then some dancing and a story. The parents/carers will be given coffee and cake! There is no charge! It's a great way to start the week. Do come and join us!

Churchwardens

Robin Greenwood 779540 Sara Mason 779169 Vanessa Rosewell 841182 Theo Mezger 779277 Tony Gaster 779110 Nick Owen 779162



Choirs: Itchen Valley Choir, Overton Choral Society, Sarisbury Choral Society, Winchester City Festival Choir

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Photo image: by permission Berry Stone



pressure on reducing clergy numbers even more will just get greater and greater. Ultimately, we may be asked to **merge** with the church in Alresford; perhaps to form a single parish with them. If that happens clergy would be sent out from Alresford whose priorities would be set by the larger whole, rather than the particular needs and characteristics of the Itchen Valley.

I wonder whether you remember two crime series in the sixties and seventies: There was Dixon of Dock Green, who lived in the community and knew everyone. He could deal with local crime because he knew who was likely to have committed it.

Then there was Z Cars - two policemen in a patrol car who sat waiting for something to happen and then drove in to deal with the crisis. strangers in uniform. It's a bit like that with Christian ministry. Will it be conducted by the person that is known in the community and trusted - the Dixon of Dock Green model? Or by a series of strangers who come in from time to time to conduct services, but are otherwise absent and unknown the Z Cars model? If we want to remain an independent church in our community we need to be able to justify retaining the Dixon of Dock Green model. We need to show that there is a very good reason to apply a

different approach to us! Although I cannot guarantee this, my sense is that we will be able to do so if, amongst other things, we see the church growing significantly in attendance. What I mean by 'growing' is progressively more people attending our services regularly (once a month). In Itchen Valley Parish, in walking distance from where you live, we have a range of services from the traditional and contemplative - our early morning Communion services and Evensong, both twice a month - to our Parish Communions, also twice a month, to our more contemporary services: both our Family Worship and Valley Worship. For a small church with a skeleton team we really do have a lot going on! The details of all our services can be found on our website www.itchenvalleychurches.org and if you 'follow' the website then you will be alerted about what is happening. It may be that you have got out of the habit of going to church. Please do reconsider whether you might join us again. I know that the church can be annoying and sometimes the clergy can be disappointing for various reasons. But sometimes the cause that drove you away may have moved on. Give us a try again! On the other hand, you may object 'I don't believe in God, so you won't get me in your churches



however much I may think having a church in the Itchen Valley is a good thing'. OK I do understand that. On Pentecost Sunday, 9 June, I will be giving a talk (under the title 'Not drunk as you suppose') at the Martyr Worthy 6 pm Evensong (at which our Parish Choir will sing) on why it is rational to believe in Christianity. Do please come and see if this is for you. Just have another look. It could make a difference for you and your family and also make a difference to our future in this place. Alex Pease

Once again it's time to vote

Rector

An election for a City Councillor to represent the Alresford and Itchen Valley Ward will take place on Thursday 2 May. The polling card delivered to you in April will tell you where you can vote. Polling stations are open from 7 am until 10 pm. The current councillor, retiring by rotation, is Kim Gottlieb, who is not standing for re-election here. The candidates for this ward are: BORGES Karl. Bishops Sutton. Green Party GORDON-SMITH Russell, Alresford, Liberal Democrats SAUNDERS Annie. Alresford. The Conservative Party Candidate WIGHT Ian. Alresford. Labour Party Vernon Tottle

For the Love of Birds by Elaine Labram

How and why did you start?

I started when I was a child, joining the young branch of the RSPB, but then as I grew up I had less time. I returned to



birding when I retired, and decided to volunteer for the RSPB on the Osprey Project.

Do you make lists? And do you count by sight or sound?

I do keep a list - I've about 1400 world birds on my list....but really keen birders have 5000 plus.

It's a combination of sight and sound, but to learn bird song takes patience, time and good hearing! I have learnt many calls but I'm a novice compared to some of my birding friends. Sight is sometimes easier and books can help in identifying species - but some birds are really difficult to see (e.g. the nightingale!) and then sound is invaluable.



Where have you been birding?

I've been to the Gambia, Botswana, India, North America, Costa Rica, Australasia and many European destinations, as well as lots of places in the UK.

What advice would you give novice birdwatchers?

If possible go out with a more knowledgeable friend, or to an RSPB or Wildlife Trust reserve where there are often hides with helpful people. Otherwise just take a pair of binoculars and walk to the river or Avington Lake and just watch!

Which binoculars would you recommend?

I've found some of the most reasonably priced binoculars offer good sightings. You don't always have to spend a lot, and I would start with Opticron as a good entry level pair. Start with 10 x 42 but if you find those heavy go down to an 8. I have small pairs as well and also a telescope that gives wonderful views of wildlife at a distance.

Star moments?

That's really hard..... the kingfisher on the river, seeing a nightingale, finding a gyr falcon..... I just love watching the birds in the garden or wherever I am on holiday so I have lots of star moments!

I can't take photos and look at the birds at the same time so the photos here and on the front cover are taken by Henry! Elaine Labram

Microsoft and me

For many years I have used Microsoft Outlook for my email. Recently my version – 2010 - threw a wobbly and my PC stopped communicating with the email server at BT. My first call was to BT technical support. I was agreeably surprised at the speed of response and help I was given. Needless to say, this was not a BT issue.

So, after some research, I phoned Microsoft support. It's tedious to get through, but eventually I reached a technician who was speaking from the Philippines. Very quickly he said my product was out of date, so I had little choice but to upgrade to Office 365 at an annual fee of £80. The software was downloaded, which took time and then the new version of Outlook was installed.

It all worked by giving the technician control over the computer. After an hour my phone battery failed but the guy did not give up, he phoned me back! I was impressed. Getting the mailbox to function took a few attempts but it was all done.

Next, I had to do the same with my laptop. This time the download did not work and I could do nothing. Another call to Microsoft was needed and it took some time to find a way to delete the offending Office software and start again. I was then able to finish it by myself. I have I 6000 emails, so the .pst file is quite large. Everything now works well and I have all the latest software. Frankly, given the time I had, I feel the £80 fee very good value. I think Microsoft gave a 5-star service. Tony Gaster

....but DO remember it's fine to talk to Microsoft if YOU initiate the call but NEVER speak to them if 'Microsoft' phones you out of the blue. That is almost certainly a scam being set up. Chief Editor

Local summer opera at The Grange Festival

As previewed in last August's IVN, The Grange Festival will be staging Mozart's



Marriage of Figaro, Verdi's Falstaff, and Handel's Belshazzar in its third season starting on 6 June. The Marriage of Figaro was put on locally to acclaim in October, but we can expect a rather more elaborate production at The Grange! The producer is Martin Lloyd-Evans, who created the magical Mansfield Park at The Grange in 2017, with conductor Richard Egarr and The Academy of Ancient Music. Figaro & Susanna are sung by Roberto Lorenzi and Ellie Laugharne, while Toby Girling and Simona Mihai sing the roles of Count and Countess. All these singers are relatively young artists who have already starred in a range of roles in many of the leading UK and European opera houses.

Verdi's Falstaff is perhaps less wellknown, but as the last opera that Verdi wrote, it is rightly described by The Grange as 'a life-enhancing celebration of love, laughter and joie-de-vivre'. Freely adapted from Shakespeare's Merry Wives of Windsor and Henry IV Parts 1& 2, the opera stars Robert Hayward in the title role. Robert has had a stellar career appearing at Glyndebourne, Covent Garden, ENO and WNO among many other leading houses, and is supported by Nicholas Lester (Ford), Alessandro Fisher (Fenton) and a large cast of other experienced singers.

Handel's *Belshazzar* is an intriguing choice; originally written in 1743 as a highly successful oratorio, it tells of the fall of Babylon at the hands of Cyrus

the Great and the freeing of the Jewish nation. The chorus plays centre stage, alternating as pleasure-seeking Babylonians, solemn Jews, or noble Persians. It is a new collaboration between The Grange Festival and Harry Christophers' famous singing group 'The Sixteen', who celebrate their 40th anniversary this year. Truly an operatic rarity and a 'must' for Handel enthusiasts!

Besides these three operas there are two nights of Dance@TheGrange on 25 and 26 June, last year's innovation that won great acclaim, and on 5 July the John Wilson Orchestra visits for an evening of music from Hollywood & Broadway - bound to be very popular indeed, with a waiting list already for tickets!

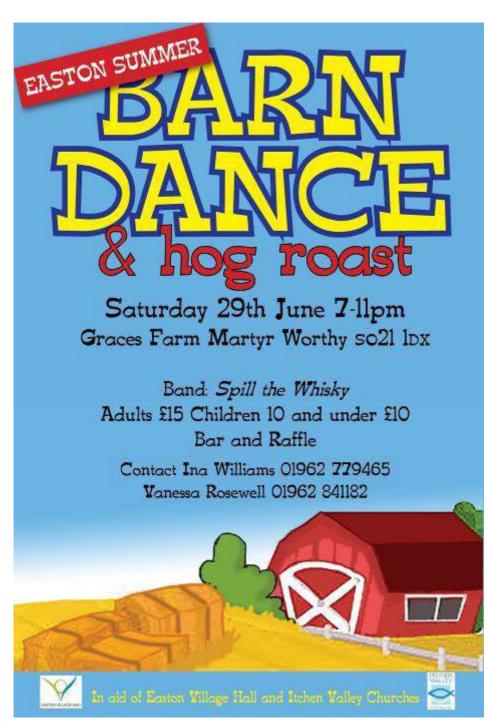
So it all adds up to a month's worth of high-class entertainment just ten minutes' drive away for most of us - what's not to like?

Peter McManus

Our Wild Valley: Looking for clues for Ratty.

I began to volunteer for a scheme to survey 500m stretches of river for water voles for Peoples Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) in 2018. The animal is no longer sufficiently widespread that its burrows might be so plentiful as to make the river banks fall in, with the water vole (Ratty) heard plopping into the water as one walked past. The water vole is the fastest declining mammal in the UK; the PTES survey began in 2015, with over 850 recording sites.

On the River Itchen I contacted a few land/river managers spread out along the river, who kindly let me search for water vole. I also had two experts out





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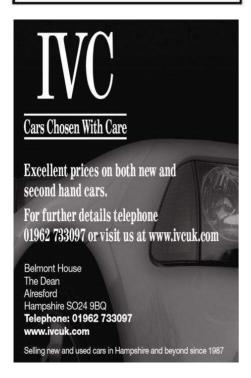
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with me on two occasions to get me back up to speed at looking at vole poo, otter spraints (aren't we lucky), otter slides and footprints (really lucky!) and burrows, nibbled vegetation, paths and even grazed lawns that water voles create by nibbling on the bank's edge. I have to give huge thanks to the Harrisons and Chris Matcham (who did a full survey in 1997 for water vole along the length of the River Itchen), Simon Ffennell, the Bullens, Rocheinne Pearce and the County Mammal Recorder Andy Rothwell, who helped install otter holts on the river years back.

I had to fill in forms with details of the site, which included a note if mink trapping is being practised (those American mink that were let out of factories in the 1980s into the wild). Details of mammal signs along the stretch of river bank chosen were noted. We found signs of bank vole, field vole, one burrow with potential for water vole, old lawns near the river, possible runs along perfectly vegetated banks for water vole but no actual water vole droppings or signs of a feeding station.

Both droppings and feeding station clues are required to confirm presence. Water vole droppings are said to look like tic-tacs and are larger than bank/ field vole poo. Piles of reeds half eaten can be found; the top edge of the reed with a distinct and precise 45° angle



where they have been nibbled off. Feeding stations are found in sheltered well hidden places where they can eat without fear of being taken, by a heron for example. I also found piles of empty snail shells which were left by feeding water shrews, well hidden within tussock sedge.

I undertook these surveys because, after chatting with Simon Ffennell and George Mann about what wildlife used to be about (check out George's book, as in 2008/9 he did see water vole), it sounded as if water vole had not been seen recently. Mink is being noted along the river, and once in a river catchment they will work up and down it, accessing water vole burrows and eating whatever they find. They are a bit like 'Arnie' and have full traction on their legs in the form of tough pads, sharp teeth and claws. They are very bendy; not much can escape them. Other predators such as heron also can get through a water vole's family quite quickly, and there are many other factors that impact on the river's ecosystem. It remains unknown at present what effect the large amounts of pollutants such as pesticides, farm waste and chemicals found in rivers have on water vole populations, but it can't be positive. On average a water vole might only live one summer season, so to survive a winter season. plenty of young are needed to survive and the female typically has two litters. A water vole will hunker down over winter eating up stores of tubers and roots: they are even known to store potatoes.

I will go and re-check for signs on the river stretches again this year. At Winnal Nature Reserve they had few signs of water vole last autumn and also recorded mink, which they are trapping. The River Itchen has an

intricate catchment area with some stretches with river managers and some not. HIWWT and SDNP have a mink trapping programme and have been very helpful with information on where traps are out, and there is a possibility to get more traps out. PTES also include citizen science monitoring projects for hedgehog, stag beetle and mammals seen in your garden. They are a charity and run all sorts of training, projects and educational programmes and fund research into animals like the dormouse. A lot of the animals are what we think of as iconic to our landscape and the history of the UK. As resources for nature conservation groups become smaller and smaller, charities and local groups that can monitor/record local wildlife become more and more important. If you have your phone with you, there is a mammal tracker app, which I will try out this month, so records go to the Hampshire Mammal Group. You can even input dead ones the cat brought in, or ones squashed on the road. Photo of water vole from PTES website PTES.org. Please do have a look at what they do. Sophie Rogers

Comings and Goings

Welcome to Jim and Libby Christie who are moving into No 6 off Church Lane, Martyr Worthy.

Lucinda Ffennell

Welcome to Katie and Guy Jackson and Oscar aged two, who have moved from Hambledon to 2

Malthouse Close

We say goodbye to Sue Fatchen who has moved from 2 Malthouse Close to a cottage at Headbourne Worthy Judith Mezger

From the Parish Council



There is a separate article on the Litter Pick, but a big thank you to all who participated and an especial thank you to the ladies of the W.I. who once

again produced tea, coffee and cakes for all the workers at the end. Also a big thank you to Alistair Ward-Boughton-Leigh, our youngest Councillor, who organised the event for the second year running. Those who have kept an eye on our website or the notice board will already be aware that there will not be a contested election for members of the Parish Council. Of the nine remaining members on the Council at the end of the four year term, six have put their names forward to stand again. No one new has come forward to stand and as there are ten places, the six are elected leaving four places vacant. The six are Paul Moffatt, Yvette Riley, Christopher Langford, Jonathan Legat, Stephen Andrews and myself. A further complication has arisen, in that we have been advised that Easton and Martyr Worthy should be represented by six Councillors and Itchen Abbas and Avington by four. Looking at population distribution this concept may be out of date, in need of checking and, if necessary, revising. At present however it means that; Easton has no one, Martyr Worthy two (Paul Moffatt & Yvette Riley), Itchen Abbas three (Jonathan Legat, Stephen Andrews and myself) and Avington one (Christopher Langford). Looking geographically that means that there is only one representative from the south side of the river, and as has been the

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· ·			1130		
Mahjong / U3A		400 - 1700		Anne	01420 563393
Yoga for men	_	2000 - 2130		Alex	07814 678155
NCT Yoga		10.30 & 1800		Janet	07973 855107
Older Adult Exercis		1130 - 1230		Caroline	01962 779796
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Riverbank	Mon Wed	Thur 8.30ar	n to 3pm	Maria	07900 437685
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Pure Circuits	Mon	19.30	Juliette	e 07	799 890860
Rugby Tots	Tue 10.00 Thur 15.5	0, Wed 10.15 & 60	Phil	03	453 133258
Boules	Tue	18.00	Jenny	01	962 779813
Ladies Short Tennis	Wed	14.30	Armine		962 779611
Pilates	Wed 09.	15 & 18.00	Aimee		546 941489
Choir	Wed	19.30	Gary		962 732350
Badminton	Thur	19.30	Mike		887 503345
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case for over two years we have only one woman on the Council. So please come and fill those places. Have a talk with us, come and attend a meeting and find out what is going on. It can be very interesting to learn what goes on behind the scenes at a local level. We say goodbye to Chris Jeffes, Richard Stoodley & Alistair Ward-Boughton-Leigh, and thank them for their work for the Parish Council in the past. In all three cases time pressure has made it difficult to continue but we hope some of them will be able to join us again in the future.

One small but significant change you may have seen recently is there is now a white line opposite the Old School House in Church Lane, Martyr Worthy This is to request people not to park there, as doing so prevents vehicle access to the driveways of that house. A white line does not have the legal status of yellow lines. It is a compromise, as yellow lines and the notices which are required to accompany them are not appropriate in a conservation area. Please respect this line. We need to see how well it works so please let us know of any difficulties. Patrick Appleby

Restoration work on the Itchen at Abbots Worthy





The habitat improvement works on this short stretch were first conceived by the Environment Agency as part of the Test and Itchen Restoration Strategy. The section of the river downstream from the M3 bridge to the island in front of the Worthies was identified in the Atkins report as being of unfavourable and declining SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) condition. This section of the river has three owners, so the project was a joint collaboration. The river channel was generally too deep and silted in certain areas. A big scour hole had developed at the junction of the Fulling Mill carrier, whilst the main river directly downstream was becoming badly silted. Southampton University monitored the flows for a full year to gain full understanding of the issues and hydrology. Their findings and proposed solution - to raise the bed of the river by introducing gravel, create some riffles, repair the scour hole and build a



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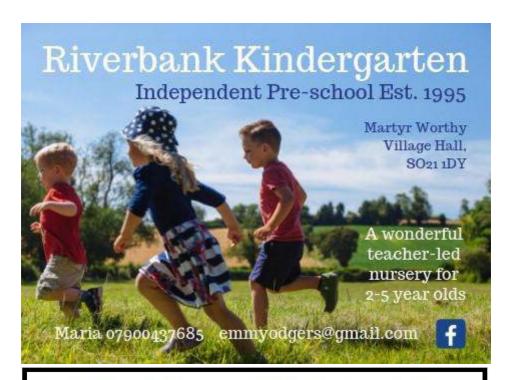
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new take-off - was presented to all the stakeholders and wildlife conservation groups. The project is very similar to those that have been completed successfully in recent years on a number of degraded stretches such as Bossington and the Mottisfont carrier on the river Test.

The main works were completed early this year and the improvements are already visible. We have ranunculus self -rooting on the new gravel riffles and the grayling have been spawning in several areas, immediately taking advantage of the improved conditions. The right hand bank had become quite heavily shaded along its entire margin which was hindering plant and river weed growth, so some selective clearing and pollarding has been done to allow the light to penetrate, with some marshy wet scrapes created to encourage species like the Southern Damsel Fly. The resulting timber has been stacked into wood piles, which although they may look rather untidy to the uninitiated, will provide essential homes for hedgehogs, nesting birds and a host of invertebrates

Over the next few years with the favourable habitat we expect the establishment of ranunculus and water celery growth on the clean, silt free gravel. This should lead to increasing populations of Gammarus, Mayfly species including the Southern Iron Blue and Turkey Brown and many

other chalk river invertebrates, which in turn provide food for the native fish and river birds like the Wagtails, Reed Warbler and Reed Bunting. Richard Banbury banburyr@orvis.co.uk
Richard has kindly offered to organise a guided nature walk of this section of the river, on a date in July or August — look out for further information - Ed

The Practical Gardener

April has been cold and dry and we've all been concerned about the early blossom, though there's not much you can do. I had geraniums outside and they have all survived, so perhaps not quite as cold as feared. This is a truly busy time of year with so much to do. However, it's also wonderful with so much bursting into leaf, very much a transforming season. How about those vegetables? If you grow onions (easy) you do have to keep a watch on birds - they don't eat the young sets but sometimes they get pulled out of the soil. Pigeons are a menace; they have already attacked my early peas, which by the way are in bloom. So netting is necessary both for peas and beans. I sow peas every two weeks with the aim of succession. The flavour of your first home-grown peas is just great! For those with space, there's a whole





range of different brassicas. Some do take a very long time, Brussels sprouts for example, but I grow a fast maturing kale or broccoli called Green Magic. In recent weeks I have harvested late purple broccoli which was planted in July. Everything I know attacks brassicas: slugs, snails, whitefly, caterpillars and more. You have to be vigilant. Slugs burrow into cabbages and have a feast!

Last year, I found germination of all root crops very difficult. This year I've started everything in the greenhouse. So far so good. The trick is to plant out without disturbing the roots and it's not easy. I love fresh sweet corn but it can be very choosy. It only grows well in one place in my garden. I've noted than germination is very poor, about 50%, of all three varieties. It should be planted outside now. An easy crop to grow is lettuce and I mix and match with varieties. Again, sow just a few at



I wish my asters would germinate like Tony's! Ed

two-week intervals. As I write the potatoes are still under fleece but I expect to have removed it before the month end.

The surprising thing about growing your own flowers is the speed of growth. Marigolds are easy, in fact mine are already in the ground. Others can take weeks. Every year I also sow lupins, delphiniums, hollyhocks, wallflowers and sweet williams. They will grow this year and flower next year.

Just a comment on watering. When it's sunny I need to water in the greenhouse two or three times daily. Bit of a chore really. The same goes for pots, but even some crops like onions don't like to be too dry. I've played around with automatic systems but they only seem able to deliver the same amount of water each time irrespective of need. Not very clever! Happy Gardening! Tony Gaster.

Protecting your home and the things you care about

Although burglary rates are falling in many areas across the country and you are three times less likely to be a burglary victim than in 1993, there were still 193.851 recorded domestic burglaries in England and Wales in 2015. Being burgled is a horrible experience - to know that a stranger has been inside your home, among your precious possessions and taken things that mean something to you is devastating for many victims. The Alresford District is fortunate in that we are a relatively low crime area, but we want to keep it that way, so we need to be vigilant and take sensible precautions.



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Neighbourhood Watch recommends using what is called the WIDE principle when looking at how to secure your home – and it's very simple. Try to ensure your home has: W Window locks on every window

- I Interior lights left on a timer when you're away
- D Double or dead bolts fitted on doors
- E External lights on a sensor Households living in Neighbourhood Watch areas experience 21% fewer burglaries than similar households. If you are going on holiday
- Make sure your home looks occupied. Ask a neighbour to move post away from your letterbox – important if you have a glass pane in your front door and consider letting a neighbour park on your driveway.
- Put some lights on a timer switch to make your house look occupied.
 You can also get timer switches for a radio or TV.
- Be careful about posting on Facebook and other social media that you're away. Selfies posted from the beach are a sure-fire way to tell everyone you know that your house is empty!
- Lock the front door and have a great time. But remember to leave your contact details with a trusted neighbour.

Andrew Black Alresford and District Neighbourhood Watch Association

Chestnut Horse closes again

After moving in to the Easton pub in November last year, Simon and Annie have now moved out again. The Chestnut Horse is now closed until further notice. Ed

Valley residents receive awards from the Mayor

The annual Mayor of Winchester Awards ceremony took place recently. Two Itchen Valley residents were acknowledged for their contributions to the community. The recipients were presented with the certificates by Mayor Frank Pearson, dressed in his full official regalia, and excerpts from the dedications are reproduced below.

Jacqui Squire, who lives in Avington, has been a dedicated volunteer at Trinity, taking on a variety of roles, whether that be collection of food donations, working in the office or helping at fund raising occasions. She has been involved in the planning and implementation of Trinity Winchester's main fund raiser, The Big Sleep Out, over the past 5 years. We thank you for your endless commitment and loyalty.



Using his amazing IT knowledge, Tom Ashbee of Itchen Abbas invented the Itchen List; it's an online village notice board and corner shop all rolled into one. Open to everyone within the Itchen Valley, it is simple to use and safe for all ages.



It provides the opportunity to give news, views, borrow items (even including bagpipes!), seek needed services, find lost pets, sell unwanted goods, and offer free items and advice. It really has transformed our lives in the Valley. We couldn't manage without it now! Thank you Tom!

Compiled by Vernon Tottle Chief Editor, Itchen Valley News

Local monthly information

Waste collections in May

Black bins and green bags on Saturday II and Friday 24 May. Green bins on Friday 3 and 17 May.

Cameo

On Tuesday 21 May.

Farmers Market in Winchester Sunday 12 and 26 May.

Parish Council Full Meeting Thursday 2 May IA&A village hall

67 Bus operated by Stagecoach.

School term timetable operates 1 - 24 May.

Mondays and Thursdays to Winchester: 07:53 09:23 13:53 16:23 17:23 Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays to Winchester:

07:53 09:23 11:53 13:53 16:23 17:23 Mondays and Thursdays to Alresford: 11:49 15:19 17:11 18:09

Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays to Alresford:

09:49 | 11:49 | 13:19 | 15:19 | 17:11 | 18:09

School holiday timetable operates 28 - 31 May

Mondays and Thursdays to Winchester: 07:53 09:23 13:53 17:23

Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays to Winchester:

07:53 09:23 11:53 13:53 15:23 17:23 Mondays and Thursdays to Alresford: 11:49 15:19 17:11 18:09

Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays to Alresford:

09:49 11:49 13:19 15:19 17:11 18:09

Saturday service (same for the whole month.

Towards Winchester: 08:23 | 11:23 | 14:23 | 17:23 | Towards Alresford: 09:19 | 12:19 | 15:19 | 18:09

No Sunday or bank holiday service All times shown are at Itchen Abbas.

Times are 5 minutes later (or earlier) at Easton.

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