

ITCHEN Valley News

Issue 86 February 2021

For Avington, Easton, Ithen Abbas and Martyr Worthy





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WELCOME to the Valley News



 It's Valentine's Day this month and the Eds are feeling rather 'loved -up' Firstly, absence makes the heart grow fonder and we're missing each other! Normally, we'd be putting these pages together, snuggled up in Lucy's kitchen but like everyone else, we're adapting to different ways of working. We're also feeling very fond of our valley neighbours. As we embarked on this edition, we were on the lookout for things to keep us cheerful during this latest lockdown. We didn't have to look far. A heartfelt thank you to all the roving journalists in our midst, who came up trumps with a variety of contributions. Please keep them coming! We love hearing about what's going on and articles penned by you make these pages so much more relevant and hopefully interesting!

This month we shine a spotlight on just some of the people and businesses who are adapting to these unprecedented times. From the Grange Estate equipping local residents with new skills whilst quenching our thirst with award-winning wines (Fi, dry January is officially over!), to the Alresford Gift Shop spreading scented joy and humour. And let's face it, we all need a bit of that, especially with many houses in the Valley packed full again with youngsters home and Wifi connections bowing under the pressure!

If you're searching for a corner of calm, you'll find it here. Teens will welcome the latest yoga offering from Dionne with new classes designed to help adolescents cope with stress and anxiety and much more. Self care is

more important than ever. For some that may be a little beauty DIY (see page 24) for others it may be time in the garden (see page 27) or in front of the TV. See page 25 for some top picks. And no edition would be complete without some food for the soul. On page 37 readers share some of their favourite places to shop and eat. And our own Sue Sheph has a recipe to accompany a cuppa that might hit the spot for those supervising home-schooling!

Last but not least, our front cover is in honour of all those in our community doing so much to keep 'the show on the road'. THANKYOU! Keep safe everyone. Charlotte Appleby is your Editor next month. *Lucy & Fi*

Itchen Valley News

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Valley Happenings

There once was a limerick contest.....

*The judges were all very impressed
And they all did exclaim
As they umpired the game
That the poems had been so well
expressed*

Fortunately, all the entries for the Itchen Valley News limerick competition were much better than that. Unfortunately, with all the votes counted, there was no clear winner. Maybe we all need to practise our poetry skills. We have a couple of empty advertising slots on page 38 so, until they get taken, we may use them for any locally-themed haiku or limericks received by the magazine.



The photo shows me presenting the prize to Clare Gaster for winning the Haiku competition.

Keep rhyming!

Vernon Tottle

Review of *Pagliacci* (by Leoncavallo) at The Grange

For opera fans, starved of almost any opportunity to hear a live performance since lockdown started in 2020, the news that The Grange would be staging (for just one Sunday in the middle of December) the one act opera **Pagliacci** (Clowns) was, as they



Photo taken by Matthew Williams-Ellis

say, music to the ears. In accordance with current regulations, pairs of patrons were seated with an empty seat between each pair, and every other row left empty. Patrons were required to wear a mask whilst in the theatre, and singing along was strictly forbidden (!)

Word had reached these parts that Christopher Luscombe, remembered for his wonderful production in the 2019 Grange Festival of Verdi's *Falstaff*, had managed to stage the opera in a church in Islington during November, and had won great reviews. And so, on a damp and windy afternoon, there were two sold-out performances, both greeted with enthusiastic applause at the end of the opera.

Production values were necessarily minimalist in style, keeping costs low with the auditorium at best one third of capacity. Chris, with Welsh soprano Elin Pritchard's help, had brought together an outstanding cast of soloists, accompanied by a small chorus and a five piece instrumental ensemble



Photo taken by Matthew Williams-Ellis

conducted by John Andrews. The storyline revolves around a travelling band of clown-style players, where real life marital intrigue overlaps with the plot of the play they are staging. Elin Pritchard, who sang the role of Alice Ford in *Falstaff*, played Nedda, with Robert Hayward (Tonio), Peter Auty (Canyo), Nicholas Lester (Silvio) and Aled Hall (Beppe) taking the other major roles, three of the four having sung with Elin in *Falstaff*. Given their truly first-class performances, it seems invidious to single out just one of these, but Auty's rendering of the famous aria, 'Vesti la giubba' (loosely translated, 'the show must go on') was rewarded with a terrific ovation. At the end, after much stamping of feet, we emerged into the wintry weather feeling our spirits had been greatly restored in the way only a live performance can achieve.

Peter McManus

Watch your speed through Abbots Worthy

A couple of weeks ago (20 December) a Land Rover Discovery heading towards Martyr Worthy on the B3047 hit a car coming out of Park Road, flipped onto its side, smashed through a Leylandii hedge and badly damaged the house on the corner of Mill Lane.

Parents and a young child had to be rescued from the car, all the emergency services were in attendance, the driver of the other car was taken to hospital, and it was extremely fortunate that there were no fatalities.

For years the residents of Abbots Worthy have campaigned for a 30mph limit in the village. The junction with Mill Lane and Park Road has extremely reduced sight lines, and is dangerous for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. There is much increased traffic on the



B3047 and curbing speed is the only way to reduce accidents. Perhaps now the authorities will listen.

If you wish to give us support, please email me at frankbbtt@gmail.com Meanwhile please watch your speed going through Abbots Worthy, and bear in mind that 30 really is enough even though 40 is permitted.

Frank Abbott

January meeting of Easton W.I.



We met on 14 January on Zoom and enjoyed a much-needed chat together. We all meet in small groups, but it is nice to see more

faces. This month we had been asked to vote on the short list of five Resolutions put forward by members from all over the UK on subjects including awareness of the subtle signs of ovarian cancer, improving recognition of women with coronary heart disease, stopping the destruction of peat bogs to tackle climate change, protection of nature space and racism and discrimination.

Members talked through each of the Resolutions and voted unanimously in favour of supporting the resolution on ovarian cancer. Every two hours in the UK someone dies of ovarian cancer.

Making sure GPs and the public know what to look for will not only ensure the early detection and treatment of this disease, but transform lives today and for generations to come.

The W.I. has, from its inception, campaigned for issues that matter to its members, from equal pay to climate change, mental health and violence against women. Over the past 100 years it has embraced a diverse set of challenges and helped bring about change. From its humble start in North Wales, W.I.s worked to boost food supplies in both World Wars, helping women take an effective part in their communities, learning together and working to influence local, national and international issues relating to its members.

In 1918 a Resolution was passed calling for “sufficient supply of convenient and sanitary houses, being of vital importance to women in the country”. 1922 and 1924 Resolutions called for an increase in women police. In 1943 the Suffolk West Federation proposed a Resolution calling for “equal pay for equal work”. This followed on from rising debate during World War II on equality.

Protection of our countryside led to the Keep Britain Tidy campaign in 1954 and 1964 saw both a demand “to restrict the amount of smoking in public places” after the link between smoking and lung cancer was confirmed and a call to the Government urgently to provide a routine smear test to detect cervical cancer.

As early as the 1970s Resolutions against “plastic pollution” came to the fore followed by HIV and AIDS awareness. Members were also campaigning for global food security

and agricultural self-sufficiency in developing countries and NFWI was one of several organisations who founded the Fairtrade Foundation in 1992. More recently we have campaigned for “care not custody” to end the inappropriate detention of people with mental health problems and asked Government to end the shortage of midwives and allow carers to stay with people suffering from dementia and Alzheimer’s disease when admitted to hospital.

The W.I. is still the largest women’s organisation in the UK and will continue to make a difference in the future! Come along and join us!

Kyrene Beames,

President, Easton WI

National Garden Scheme, Hampshire



Well - here we are again...

This pandemic does seem never ending, but with the increase of cases still happening, despite this latest lockdown,

and the Government advice to “Stay At Home”, we are unable to welcome visitors to our gardens but we are reviewing the situation on a two weekly basis. The website ngs.org.uk will have all the up to date details of any openings, and the facility to Pre-Book tickets.

Looking forward to a rapid roll out of the vaccination for us all.

Keep well and keep safe.

Pat Beagley (Publicity)

National Garden Scheme - Hampshire
pat.beagley@ngs.org.uk

Low down on Cow Down

The restoration work and fencing of the river at Cow Down has aroused strong views locally.

The Itchen Valley News strives to report objectively about Valley matters, and not to become embroiled in local controversy and run the risk of appearing to take sides.

After very considerable thought and discussion within the editorial team, we have decided not to publish any further views on this matter. The Parish Council has been in consultation with the various stakeholders, and the Chairman's report on page 9 describes the current situation.

If the magazine is perceived to have been biased in its coverage of the Cow Down issue, it was not our intention and we unreservedly apologise.

From the Chief Editor and the Editorial team

Snack Attack for the NHS



The Tea at 3 group of four retirees, Polly, Gordon, Lynn and I have met most days since March 2020. We were lucky to have open plan gardens to allow socially distanced drinks at Little Hayes Green. We all mastered 'zoom' for bad weather and complete lockdowns. Covid has had a strange

benefit for local camaraderie and support. We check and care for each other daily, and above all talk, whereas before the pandemic we just waved or smiled!

The 'snackattack!' started in lockdown 1. We read on the wonderful Itchen valley email list about the need for a fridge for cold drinks for doctors, nurses and support staff in Winchester's hospital involved in the pandemic.



A military style network grew in a few days involving Red Radish, The Plough pub, and many other individuals. We raised almost £1,000 in just a few weeks back in May...bringing perhaps a little sunshine in those early dark bewildering days.

The dark days have returned with a vengeance and so the T at 3 group are crowdfunding again. We thought the NHS staff may well appreciate a little more than news stories and memories of distant clapping! It's common knowledge now that medical teams dealing with COVID19 patients have to wear hot PPE and dehydrate quickly. During their start of shifts /rare breaks / changes of clothes/ home time, a soft drink and chocolate bar might just raise a smile and get them home safe.

We raised over £800 in a week and Ashley from The Plough volunteered to



order the snacks and collect - he was down at the wholesalers at 7.00am to then take the soft drinks and high energy bars to the RHCH just a few days after starting the project !

Over 250 staff (porters, physiotherapists, ancillary workers, doctors and nurses) have enjoyed the snacks and drinks on their various shifts in ICU and associated hot wards, as well as some GP hothubs staff.

Liz Kavanagh of Winchester Magazine has helped mastermind the project. She suggested that we set up donation hampers rather than just ask for cash. Using social media I managed to set up local store collection points around Winchester in two days . Thanks to Rachel at West Lea Farm Shop, Callum at The Chestnut Horse village shop and Twyford Stores, Hursley Community Shop and The Dever Stores. I'm hoping others may join in! Customers can take their own goodies or buy from the local store - a win-win relationship.

The hampers are then regularly emptied and taken to the RHCH or GP hothubs.

We've also had all sorts of other donations such as boxes of Diet Coke and Bounty bars from Avington Golf Course

We've hit almost celebrity status by featuring on Meridian and Radio Solent

but the main thing is that instead of feeling helpless and isolated, a little bit of cheer has been generated by networking the 'giving feeling'!

Kim Adams

www.justgiving.com and search for Kim Adams.

Radio Solent podcast. Afternoons with Lou Hannan on 12 January. A 6 minute interview about the project at 18 minutes.

King George's Field



As part of its response to the climate change emergency, the parish council recently commissioned a report from Kiss Tree Management to make recommendations on tree maintenance and planting on King George V Field at Couch Green. The report, which the council has accepted, proposed the planting of over one hundred native trees and shrubs, including a wide variety of species, together with the removal of some "dead wood".

The planting will be around the central hedge and the perimeter of the field and will not interfere with its recreational use. Phase 1 of the project, involving some thirty five trees, was scheduled for the middle of February but, due to the Tier 4 restrictions, we have put this back to the autumn.

In order to minimise costs, the council

will be seeking grant support to buy the trees and calling for volunteers to help with the planting. If you would like to volunteer a few hours of your time and labour to join the task force for this worthwhile community project later in the year, please contact me on 01962 779418 or at cllr.s.percy@itchenvalleyparishcouncil.org.uk
Steve Percy

Playground Upgrade - Old School Field, Easton



Please let us know your views: This old faithful piece of balance equipment needs replacing.

We'd love to hear from the valley children about their thoughts on the replacement options. Please help your child to have their say by logging on to www.itchenvalleyparishcouncil.org.uk or visiting www.facebook.com/ItchenValleyParishCouncil from 1 February 2021 and voting for a favourite. For the adults the budget for the new piece of equipment is fixed at £5,000 and must include the equipment, labour and installation costs. Play equipment that meets the standards for public spaces is very costly.

Yvette Riley

From the Parish Council



Once again we are in lockdown. With the new variant of the Covid 19 virus transmission rate being seventy percent higher, we must keep to the rules,

especially wearing masks, not mixing and keeping our distance when outside. Our local neighbourhood groups are well established, and thank you to all who run them, but there are gaps, people who may have become more vulnerable or isolated and remember those who have recently come to live in the Valley. Please keep a lookout for these people. For those who need special help please see the information provided in the report from our County Councillor Jackie Porter on page 19.

With the uncertainty as to when lockdown will end and what restrictions may be in place afterwards, it has not been possible to fix a date for a Litter Pick this spring. We will have to wait and then act on any guidance given by the Keep Britain Tidy Campaign who oversee this event. In the meantime you can help when out walking by taking a rubbish bag and picking up litter on the way. Please be careful, wear gloves, use a litter picking stick if you have one and do not pick up anything that looks unsafe or too heavy. If you see any results of fly tipping, please report it using the Winchester City Council website.

Following much thought and discussion, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wild Life Trust, which is the tenant responsible for the fields to the north of the river at Cow Down, has decided that it will

not fence in the Right of Way (part of Footpath 31) along the northern boundary of the field adjacent to the river. Many will be pleased to learn of this decision and enjoy the uninterrupted view of the Valley floor and the river. However for this to remain the case it is dependent on everyone behaving properly. Please keep to the line of the fence and do not wander down the slope. Keep away from the trees and river bank. If there are cattle in the field, please make sure your dog is on a lead. Remember it is a right of way for people to walk along, not a cycle route nor a place where you are entitled to stop for a picnic. This may seem draconian but, if people fail to behave sensibly, it is possible that the present decision will be reversed and there will be no alternative but to install fencing. The other aspect of Cow Down is the work that has been carried out to enable the river to recover to a healthy state. Having chaired the Fact Finding meeting held last year, it is clear that this work was needed. A great deal of money and effort has been put into it. The River Itchen is both a SSSI and a Special Area of Conservation. That means that its owners and everyone else has a duty to see that it is protected. The branches that have been fixed in the river's edge at Cow Down are an essential part of the restoration work. To allow recovery in this area it must not be disturbed. A decision from Natural England is awaited but the only way to see that it remains protected is for the bank to be fenced. However while it is not fenced people and their dogs must keep out of the river. Two reasons, first because of the damage they will cause to the restoration work and second because with the increased flow rate and

restriction of the branches to access the river quickly, if a person or dog gets into difficulty, immediate rescue will not be possible and the consequences are likely to be serious. Staying with the environment, it is proposed to plant some trees at Couch Green this autumn. Please see Steve Percy's article on page 8 for details about this project.

Footpaths remain a major topic for the Parish Council and the first meeting has been held to form a committee that will focus on this subject. Denise Rosewell has agreed to chair the committee and will become the Footpath Portfolio holder. Chris Jeffes will now concentrate on work to improve a number of specific paths in need of attention.

January is the time when parish councils have to set their budgets and precepts (the share of Council Tax they receive). Despite the difficulties and extra costs caused by the pandemic, it is pleasing to report that we have managed to keep the increase in precept to one percent.

Keep safe and let's hope the vaccination programme over the next few months will get us somewhere back to near normal in the not too distant future.

Patrick Appleby
IVPC Chairman

Valentine chat up lines for Covid times

I saw you from across the road. Stay there.

OR

Can't spell quarantine
without u r a q t

The Eds

CAMEO – Come And Meet Each Other

We are not yet able to come and meet each other but the team members are continuing to deliver small gifts to our guests on (or around about) the third Tuesday of the month. We would not want people to forget the significance of that date each month! For January we thought that the key need was for a reminder of new growth and renewal and, as was becoming increasingly clear as we were discussing it, something that would carry no risk of transmitting



infection. A pot of emerging bulbs which could be left outdoors for a day or so after delivery seemed ideal. As you can see from the photograph, they are full of potential. Thank you to Fiona who came up with the idea and sourced the bulbs for us from West Lea Farm shop – we like to use local suppliers as much as possible when we buy, although most months we deliver something home-made. Plans are already afoot for making the February delivery, a closely guarded secret of course, but again very seasonal.

We remember with sadness the passing of Jim Langridge and Jim Glasspool who were still coming to CAMEO until we had to go into abeyance and also of Beryl Walker and Jean Dunn, who were among the first

CAMEO guests. They both unfortunately had to stop coming a while ago when they had to go into residential care.

We are however happy to have recruited several new guests during lockdown – at least, they will be guests as soon as we can host a lunch! If you would like to join us do please get in touch.

Charlotte Appleby 779778

Comings and Goings

We have said goodbye to David Poole from Patchings; David has moved into Winchester after

many years in Easton.

Various families have moved into Easton. We welcome the Williams family, after 7 years in the UAE, Roger and Georgie are delighted to have moved back to the UK and to Easton in particular, with their two girls. Rosa (almost 2½) & Ruby (8 months) They look forward to meeting you all and settling into the community. We welcome Michael and Cavan Malebysse -Smith into No 1, New Farm Cottages. They have moved from Bracknell with a cat called Lulu. They have grown up children living away. Richard and Anne Mathewson have moved from Weybridge in Surrey into Sweet Woodruff. They are keen to get to know people in the village. And finally, Tom Horswell has moved into Clair Matin.

Martyr Worthy welcomes Henry and Ilenia Barda, and their two children Sebastian (10) and Christian (8). They moved into Chillandham Cross. Welcome all!

Submitted by various contributors



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Bird of the Month - The Golden Plover



For over 50 years, according to a local resident, golden plovers have, strangely, gathered in the same field along the B3047. Numbers have fallen substantially but I counted 56 when I saw them in December. They breed on upland moorlands and move down to fields or estuaries in Winter. They are very wary so it was quite difficult to photograph them.

Elaine Labram

Make a Difference – Donate an iPad or laptop

Last week I was really moved by a news broadcast that brought to my attention the dire situation experienced by many families at present trying to cope with 'Home Schooling' for their offspring whilst having to work from home themselves. The footage illustrated how a particular family of five children of varying ages were in possession of only one iPhone, thus having to share it to do their different age group lessons. Can you imagine how frustrating and stressful this would be. This is not an uncommon scenario even in Hampshire.

I then followed the BBC website instructions and found a school in Eastleigh where pupils were without home computers, however I was soon

made aware of the need for devices in schools local to us including Sunhill and Itchen Abbas. Immediately I put in a request in the ItchenList with the result of collecting ten iPads and laptops. These were delivered to Sunhill, who gratefully received them, but are saying that they require more. I am sure that there are many more of you in our beautiful Valley who have old devices lurking in your cupboards collecting dust that could easily be recharged and data deleted at home or by the IT technician at the school.

Instructions for how to delete data on an iPad are as follows:

First re-charge it, then go to 'Settings', scroll down to 'General', then select 'Reset', and finally 'Erase all content and settings'.

For laptops, I suggest you Google the question.

I want to thank those of you in the Valley who responded to my initial request, but there is still more work to be done.

Please leave any devices not needed in my porch at 24 Little Hayes Lane or at Yvette Riley's house 'Tumbledown' at the bottom of Martyr Worthy Lane.

Felicity Urquhart

Wild Valley Verges and beyond



The Wild Valley Verges group has been working to encourage native wildflowers in our local verges and other local spaces, to offer advice via our 'Adopt a Verge' scheme, and to

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Save the Dates

Please be aware that, given the current situation, events may change.

17-20 June 2021 Easton Flower Festival

11 September 2021 Itchen Valley Flower and Produce Festival

18 September 2021 The Building Ball 7pm, at the David Roth Memorial Cricket Ground, Easton. Village Hall fundraiser.

23 November 2021, 9 January and 25 February 2022: Martyr Worthy Lecture Series in IA&A Village Hall in aid of Itchen Valley Churches

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lobby for a different mowing regime from the local authorities. We were very pleased to be invited to join a meeting this month with other adjoining groups with similar aims, from Alresford (New Leaf), Bishops Sutton and Kings Worthy (Worthy Conservation Volunteers). There was additional support from the Petersfield Climate Action Network and the meeting was very ably chaired by Yvette Riley.

It was very heartening to hear that we all have common aims, and our combined voluntary efforts have contributed to the commitment on the Hampshire County Council website to a review of the 2020 verge cutting regime in conjunction with the charity Plantlife to determine the cutting regime for 2021. This could mark a significant step in the right direction, and a more holistic approach: managing verges for wildlife as well as drivers.

Wild Valley Verges groups have worked hard during 2020. We have had 'DO NOT CUT YET' signs made which were used to good effect in several places, including Avington. In Easton there has been raking and seeding on the verge from the Gray's farmyard down to the old phone box. At Couch Green (our best Valley verge) we have been out raking off arisings every time we see the Council mowers go through. In Martyr Worthy yellow rattle seed has been sown in St Swithun's churchyard, and yellow rattle has also been sown on several Itchen Abbas verges along the main road.

We need to see a change of mindset from land managers, gardeners, and those maintaining public spaces from a 'neat and tidy' approach to a more tangled mosaic, which is where wildlife is supported. We are joyful to see this happening already in the Valley and our

aim is to link together more of these places which attract wildlife.

If you are interested in joining us, or in adopting a verge, please look at our Wild Valley Verges Facebook page or be in touch with us at wildvalleyverges@gmail.com.

The Wild Valley Verges team

Itchen Insight

This month we shine the spotlight on valley resident Gavin Edgerley Harris who was awarded an OBE in the New Year Honours list.



Name: Gavin Edgerley Harris

Occupation: Recently Retired.

How many years have you've lived in the Valley?

Twenty Three.

Your life in 180 characters: Born

in Hampshire with childhood spent exploring in the New Forest. After a career in law, joined the museum world becoming Director of The Gurkha Museum in 2013. I owe much to Adrienne and daughters Sophie and Geo.

Champagne moment: The Gurkha Museum flag flying on the summit of Mt Everest in 2017.

Surprise snippet: Received my first driving licence, aged 13.

Passion: Research.

Favourite place in Hampshire: Any chalk stream bank.

Best thing about the Valley: The night sky.

Worst thing about the Valley: Lack of a decent bus service.

Favourite Book or Film: Zulu.

From the City Council

Changeover Date for Green Waste Bins

The date for the changeover from green waste bags to Brown Garden Waste bins is 1 February. You can sign up either on-line or by phone (0300 300 0013).

Signing up on line seems easier than trying to do it over the phone <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/waste-recycling/garden-waste-collection-sign-up>. The large bins have plenty of capacity and it is easy to trundle them to the collection point.

The old green bag system is finishing on 1 February, so please sign up soon. The new system is 'opt in' and is paid for separately from Council Tax. £54 for the 240 litre and £39 for the 140 litre size.

Some people want to switch their other bins to a smaller size, if for example they have limited storage space. This can only be done by phone.

Broadband issues

The increase in both the number of people working from home and the amount of data they are needing to transfer has led to several areas locally seeking the installation of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP). The grant of up to £3k per property, or £3.5 k for business premises, makes it viable to a significant proportion of our residents. We have at least seven projects at various stages of progress locally and our role has been to share the expertise that has been developed elsewhere, and co-ordinate expert intervention when necessary. Top notch internet connections are not

only essential for home working and home learning during the present crisis, but also allow for future opportunities for on-line businesses for years to come.

The instigators of the South East Alresford scheme have kindly offered to host a page for any scheme in the ward, go to <https://ftp4alresford.uk/>. There is lots of useful information there, and FAQs.

We don't know how large the change will be in patterns of working in the future, once the pandemic is over, however many businesses have come to realise that the expensive offices are not as necessary as previously thought. Individuals have demonstrated that they can work effectively without the daily expense and time of commuting. Undoubtedly therefore there will be a change in the way of working. Decent data connections are a great investment for the future.

The Local Economy

We are sadly seeing restaurants and cafes close until the future clears, or in some cases permanently. There is no

doubt that our towns will change as the effects of the pandemic are established; as part of our support for local employers we are collating information on the effects of the pandemic, how confidence has been affected, and what

opportunities there are for the future. Please complete our survey at <https://digitallibdems.typeform.com/to/TfSjDFGv>

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From Our MP



As you read this, we remain in lockdown and 2021 is starting to look a lot like 2020.

The difference, and the reason I could support lockdown #3 in the House, is we finally have the ultimate escape from the deadly cycle of lockdown and release in the form of a COVID vaccine.

I have spoken regularly in Parliament on the subject and am liaising with Ministers to help our area play its part and support the national effort.

Furthermore, I have been doing my bit locally to help in a more practical way so when it's your turn to jab for victory, keep your eyes peeled for a friendly and familiar face.

While this is good news it remains my strong belief that these odious restrictions on our lives must not be in place a day longer than required.

Alongside the published vaccine delivery plan – and daily figures on how we're getting covid done – we must give the public hope.

Around 88% of those likely to get seriously unwell (and sadly die) reside within the top four priority vaccine groups. Given the only metric that really counts, and the reason why public support for lockdown is so high is the desire to prevent the NHS from

being overwhelmed, logic would dictate that once that threat has gone away we can start to lift restrictions.

We need clear heads if we want to do that. Covid-19 is not a conspiracy and it is not a hoax. We were right to take it seriously last Spring, and since, but we are equally right to demand a plan that dismantles the most draconian of laws in lock-step with the vaccination programme.

The plan commits Government to vaccine the top four group by 15th February so this really is a game-changer. My old colleague, Chris Whitty, grimly reminds us that we expect between 7,000 to 10,000 deaths from flu each in an average year and the most cautious reading would suggest the vaccination programme should take Covid deaths well below this level.

So when we have vaccinated the highest risk groups, what will we do? And when we've completed phase one by vaccinating all those with above-average risk in late March, what will we do then?

These are important questions and ones I and my colleagues will be asking. It won't happen unless we do, of that I am very certain.

We do not lock society down for common colds, seasonal flu and we cannot (no matter how awful it can be) for the little understood condition that is long covid. The many other economic, health and societal impacts of this pandemic are already serious enough so we need a roadmap out of this the public can believe in or this year is going to make the last look tame by comparison.

Much more, and daily updates, via [www.fb.com/SteveBrineMP](https://www.facebook.com/SteveBrineMP)

Steve Brine MP for Winchester & Itchen Valley

Jackie's County Corner

I hope that you and your loved ones are managing to cope in this third lockdown. **Thank you to the local groups** in the Itchen Valley division who have continued to offer support to our communities into this new lockdown. Your work is invaluable and makes us all feel safer.

But some problems are more complicated and it's worth keeping a note of the HCC Coronavirus Support helpline too. If Covid-19 has a serious impact on you or any aspect of your life, including anyone who is self-isolating, education,

threat of eviction, unpaid bills etc, please call the helpline for advice and support.

The Helpline (open 9am to 5pm) can be contacted on 0333 370 4000. (Calls charged at local rate.)

You can also call

Citizens Advice for support on 01962 848000, from 10-1pm, or 0808 278 7861

Looking for a new challenge? Why not try out the online learning from Hampshire's libraries? This term the *Learning in Libraries* programme has commenced with a wide variety of course, including a Film review course, dance classes for toddlers, helping your child with school work and Zumba Gold!

Although libraries are closed for browsing, the IT facilities (and printing) can be booked for use.

Usually, I use my February column to advertise our opening for the National

Garden Scheme Snowdrop Sunday, but husband Mark and I are really conscious that this year, the message is clearly 'stay home', so unfortunately we aren't opening in 2021 now. See the ngs.org.uk website for details of commercial sites which may be open this Spring.

But you can still get outside:

Hampshire's Country Parks remain open but the public is clearly encouraged to stay near to home for exercise. Public footpaths are getting muddier with increased use: volunteer teams are not allowed to carry out works in Covid-19 lockdown, but please continue to report problems:

the County team can do emergency works, eg: holes appearing, and fallen trees blocking paths etc.

Recycling centres are still open by booking online or calling 02380 179 949 (9-5.30pm).

Unfortunately, the service is still only open for car drivers: the hoped for pilot for non-car drivers this Spring is postponed.

As I write, the first few days on the A31 were quiet, but so far, Brexit paperwork 'compliance' is good. Once the hauliers become familiar with the changes, it is hoped to stand down the system and we can all use the A31 as a dual carriageway again. *There is a 24/7 monitored email address for queries.*

Please contact me or HCC direct on a31.operationtransmission@hants.gov.uk or telephone 0300 555 1388

School matters: Despite Press announcements of 'schools closed', our schools are definitely



open. At present, classes are part managed both in the classroom and online as key worker and vulnerable children are at school. If your child is year 3 and above, schools (through HCC) can help with IT including pre-paid 4G internet if necessary, at the Headteacher's discretion.

Online and phone scams seem more plentiful than ever. It is very easy to be taken in by a credible phone call or email. Please report scams by phoning the Action Fraud line 0300 123 2040 (8am-8pm) or on their website www.actionfraud.police.uk. They offer an enhanced service for vulnerable victims.

There is a telephone scam asking for bank details to validate ID for a vaccination appointment. It is a SCAM! Please NEVER give out your bank details on the phone.

Cllr. Jackie Porter

www.jackieporter.co.uk 07973 696 085, jackie.porter@hants.gov.uk, [@JackieLibDem](https://twitter.com/JackieLibDem),

A day out with a Vaccinator



For those of you that don't know me, I have a mix of clinical skills working part time for the NHS leading a cardiovascular program across Wessex, whilst partnering this

delightfully with The Secret Garden Skin Clinic which is hidden in the depths of our garden in the South Downs Park. I was really delighted to be asked to put my skills back in

frontline action and support the wonderful Dr Christine Glew for a day, in our local vaccination hub at The Holiday Inn.

The majority of the population is still susceptible to COVID-19 (they don't have immunity) and so getting the vaccine administered across the population as quickly as possible should protect those who are at risk from illness. The vaccine provides protection by preparing the immune system so that in the event that a person is exposed to COVID-19, their immune system is able to respond and prevent or reduce the severity of the infection. There are two different types of vaccine available in the UK at the moment. They differ slightly in how they are made and for the vaccinator they therefore also differ in how they have to be drawn up and used although the immunity that each vaccine offers is very similar. Let me reassure you that no stage was missed in the development of these vaccines but trials ran each development phase in parallel which is unusual but expedited the development.

I started up at the Holiday Inn bright and sparkly at 8:30am. The first thing I want to say is how amazingly organised this is and what a credit it is to the people in our community that something like this can be set up so quickly. The centre saw almost 1300 individuals across 3 days last week. What an outstanding achievement. Listening to the stories on the very limited lives that people have been living since March was heart-breaking. People who had been living on their own completely shielding since March talked of being able to stand in their houses with people in their garden during the summer and talking through an open door. Of course now the

weather has become so chilly, these people are completely on their own and of course finding that emotionally very difficult. For many the trip to the vaccination centre was their first outing in what is now almost 12 months. Not surprisingly standing on your feet for an 11 hour shift is really physically demanding work vaccinating all day and trying to treat each person as an individual even though you've probably seen close to 100 also has its challenges. Thank you to the wonderful people who were so nice to us and brightened our day as we hope we looked after you well. I made it home at 7:30pm, my feet were pulsating but it was without doubt one of the most emotionally rewarding and memorable days of my career.

How can you help?

Help in the Community – Keep an eye on those living alone. It's very lonely.

Coming to the Centre – Keep us running on time! Wear a T-shirt or at least a top which is so loose it allows us to get to the very top of your arm. (this is where we vaccinate you) You don't need to bring your NHS number just your date of birth and we have all we need to find your records. Having the contact details of your emergency contact readily to hand is also helpful. There were a lot of delays related to dapper looking gentlemen wearing shirts and ties! Irrespective of how loose the sleeve is, we simply cannot roll it up high enough to give a vaccination.

Want a role?– you can apply at NHS jobs, although beware the process is lengthy!!

Sharron Gordon

A Lockdown update from The Grange, Hampshire – Wine Department



By the time this current lockdown ends most of the UK population will have been almost twelve months under some Covidic restriction or other and, looking back, with the terrible loss of life, the relentless lack of contact with family and friends and the endless waves of uncertainty ruining each and every carefully laid plan, it's been utterly horrible. But it hasn't been an exclusively miserable period...

In the public sphere, the galvanisation of tens of thousands of selfless volunteers from villages and towns across the country, each doing their bit to keep the vulnerable in their communities going, has been inspiring.

The health service has, of course, stood to the crisis as it always does - even when, as now, it appears on the brink of collapse, it seems somehow to deliver all that it ought and more. I am also in awe of the way in which everyone involved at each stage of our long, modern, international food supply chains, from grower to wholesaler, from shipper to shop-worker, has just got on with keeping the population fed and watered; it's often invisible but it is deeply impressive.

On the personal sphere there were also moments when the horror lifted...

There was the strangely euphoric experience of having all four adult

children living under one roof for three months and watching as their long-set childhood relationships gradually morphed into more considered, grown-up appreciations of each other.

There was the joy of learning new things with them (for example the utter deliciousness of our eldest's fresh, home-made pasta had, until last March, completely passed me by), the joy of having time to spend in the garden (growing a cauliflower for the first time seems to have made my life complete!?) and finally the joy of making our own cider or, more accurately, our own cider vinegar – the cider stage seemed to pass remarkably quickly - not good to drink neat but, when taken with a spoon of honey in a mug of hot water, very good for the arthritis.

Life in the vineyard has been exceptionally busy, thanks to the government's wise decision to see production of wine as essential to the common good. We decided in March, in the face of the virus and the prospect of Brexit, to start experimenting with using teams of locals instead of the mainly Romanian immigrant labour teams we have been using to date. In the first lockdown there was very good take-up, with youngsters across the county desperate to get out of the house and earn some money and this was not easy work - pulling out the 52,000 metal 'tutors' or poles that had gone in

with each vine to keep it upright and secure, bud-rubbing (thinning all the unwanted shoots on the trunk) and setting out the couple of thousand candles (or bougies) that we use to protect the vineyard from



frost – but, after a bit of complaining about sore backs and blisters, the team became pretty effective. Then we had a really horrible time in the frosts of April and May when the best mid-night lighting work of our stalwart Frost Warriors (you know who you are!) was enough, rather against the odds, to ensure we had some fruit to harvest in October.

For summer canopy work we went back to the youngsters and their bendy backs and, for harvest in October, free from lockdown restrictions, we used the teams of Romanians who had arrived especially for this task. We

were delighted to be able harvest as much as 35 tonnes – barely a third of what we had in 2019 but a huge relief after those terrible May frosts.

After the calm period in November and December, we are now getting going on with winter pruning and have secured a team of 6 or so rather more mature locals to help with this skilled task. It is the moment when you set the vine up for the year ahead, choosing the best of the current year's growth to form the foundations of the growth for the year to come. Get this wrong and the vine can enter a cycle of unchecked vegetative growth that results in masses of shoots and leaves and no grapes whatsoever but, get it just right, and the well-balanced vine produces enough shoots, leaves and flower buds to produce, and perfectly ripen, a kilo or two of luscious, juicy grapes come October. Our new winter pruning team is currently at capacity, but we will be drawing up a short reserve list so if you fancy the opportunity of learning a new skill through this lockdown, send an email to us at info@grangeestatewines.co.uk and we will put you on the waiting list. Let us hope that 2021 has no surprises up its sleeve – just the vaccine-led light at the end of this rather long and dark tunnel.

Zam Baring, Grange Estate Wines

Alresford Gift Shop goes online

Vernon and I took over The Alresford Gift Shop over 6 years ago - a completely new and different challenge for us both. The shop has been a gift shop for over 40 years. Our aim has been to stock a great range of cards plus to carry seasonal gifts, decorations and jewellery. Our customer base at



first tended to be locals to Alresford but we quite quickly established a following of people who come from quite far afield (e.g. Farnham and

Guildford) for our cards. During the first lockdown last March we were hit hard as Easter is a very busy time in the shop. All of the stock had just arrived and we had to shut. We wondered if we would survive that blow. Towards the end of lockdown, we drafted in help and developed a website in about 3 weeks flat. Populating it with over 1,000 separate products was quite a challenge. However it was well worth it as, when lockdown 2 happened, it meant that we were in a very good position to sell a huge number of Christmas cards and items by delivering them around Hampshire.

Improving our social media presence

BIRTHday yOGa POse
..... the inebriated
newt!



One of the many cards available!



and developing our website, all since July, has paid off for us and helped our profile within the town and we now have customers far afield as Liverpool, Scotland and North Wales

thanks to the power of the internet. Specific things we have had to do to handle the past year include installing a perspex screen in the shop, buying hand sanitising equipment for customers' use, operating a one way system, limiting the number of shoppers allowed in the store, cancelling special sales evenings, ordering online instead of being able to visit trade fairs and meet suppliers, stocking cards at our home address to enable cards to be 'sterile' and operating a covid safe way of delivering. All things which every independent shop has had to do. Basically to work a lot harder for a lot less money :) Satisfying though!

St Eval is always a part of our offering.



The new stock hasn't come in but our best selling St Eval candle is Sea Salt which is probably a great one at the moment as, let's face it, we would

all like to be walking on a beach or on holiday if only we could at the moment!!!

Susan Crook

www.alresfordgiftshop.co.uk

Cold weather beauty tips - Banish dry skin forever!



Most of us have retreated into our shells during the last year. No holidays to prepare for, no parties to go to. No work meetings to look our best. There is no doubt in my mind some of us have

resorted to the dreaded razor instead of faithfully waxing, and one coat of nail varnish shoddily applied to toes will do. Believe me, I have heard it enough.

But there is still something to be said for looking after ourselves, even when we aren't seeing each other and actually going out - out.... (more than taking the bin to the end of the drive or walking the dog.)

When you speak to a person who has just visited a beauty salon, they feel better. It has been time out from the normal busy mumsy / worksy stuff, and you come out feeling somehow lighter and brighter.

In the last 12 months, my beauty salon will have been closed for over 6 months. Putting it on paper - it just doesn't seem real.

With spring just around the corner, and vaccines being rolled out at lightning speed, hopefully 2021 will be better.

So here are a few helpful tips to get you (even to) Beauty Salon ready.....

You can't moisturise dead skin. - my favourite of all mantras. If your skin feels rough, or even worse, flakes skin worse than a snake, then DO NOT reach for the moisturiser, then blame it

for being rubbish. It needs exfoliating. It's dead. It's going to end up on the inside of your clothes and in your bed. Get rid of it!

A good exfoliator like the Clarins Exfoliating Body Scrub (£30 from all good Clarins stockists) is lovely to use. My best advice is to take the time to soak in the bath for at least 10 minutes before applying to skin while still wet and vigorously rubbing for a few minutes. Rinse body and bath after! For your less expensive solution, Try the St Tropez fake tan remover mitt. (£5.99 from all good St Tropez stockists). Advice again is to soak the skin well to soften it up and rub vigorously over legs, arms and back (the three main problem areas) The mitt is black - and you will be quite shocked to see what is on it after you have finished!

Then feel free to apply your moisturiser (Clarins Moisture Rich Body lotion recommended £33 from all leading Clarins Stockists) - and feel your skin soaking it in effortlessly - without all the dead stuff to get through.

Rachael Ashbee, Valley resident and owner of Alresford Beauty

Top TV picks

So, as we enter the unknown waters of 2021, we see Lady Corona living her best life, whilst we remain hunkered down at home with nothing but uncertainty and home-schooling to keep us company. This uncertainty is now being seen in the TV listings for the coming year. Normally the columns would be filled with the scheduled dates for new and upcoming entertainment but this year things are still vague with only the phrase 'Due

2021' to go by.

Still there are a few beacons of hope out there. Here are a few ideas to keep you going, as we see out this rather grey and monotonous winter.

Disney +

Firstly, if you have children and you want to avoid a mini mutiny, I recommend you subscribe to Disney+, who, at the time of writing, announced that they would be releasing new movies, such as **Wendy and Peter** and Tom Hanks **Pinocchio**, straight to Disney+. They are also previewing a whole batch of new series such as **Loki** and **Wandavision**.

Steve McQueen – The Lost Movie. Sky Documentaries

If, like our household, you yearn for the Formula One season then Steve McQueen – The Lost Movie is an absolute must watch. It's a feature length documentary which follows the failed attempt to make the ultimate F1 movie all filmed in crisp colour on 35mm film. Narrated by David Letterman and with contributions from such names as Jackie Stewart, John Sturgess (Dir. The Great Escape) and James Garner to name but a few. This is a well crafted and colourful documentary which transports us to the glamour of 60's film production along with the raw thrill of 'pre-KERS' racing.

Chef's Table. Netflix

For those of you who long for a delicious meal in a wonderful restaurant. (Remember what that's like?) Head to Netflix for The Chef's Table. Now in its 5th season, this docu-series weaves its way around the world showcasing some of the most dedicated chefs and giving you a glimpse into the world of fine dining and the passionate ambassadors of their trade. Ranging from the worlds

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No! restaurants to small family owned cafes. It is a real treat to watch and hopefully will scratch an itch for not only amazing food but travel too. Enjoy!

Whitechapel. Netflix

Rupert Penry-Jones, Phil Davis, Steve Pemberton

This follows the adventures of Whitechapel detectives who use historical cases to solve the crimes of today. A great cast and well written script kicks off with a Jack the Ripper copycat. Definite must for the sofa detective in us all.

A Very Scandi Scandal. Channel 4

Not all drama to come out of Scandinavia has to be dark and moody and this Swedish drama is testament to that. Two middle aged women find themselves, for various reasons, in a financial hole. A chance encounter with a dying professional thief offers them an opportunity to redeem their finances and give them the excitement their ordinary lives yearn for.

Ghosts. BBC iPlayer

A third series is due to start filming soon and its sure to be hotly anticipated by its many fans. Ghosts follows the life of a newly married couple who have inherited a rambling old house. Without giving too much away, only the wife can see and hear the ghosts. Delivered by the brilliant team who have been entertaining our kids (and us parents) with Horrible Histories, this could be perceived as an adult version. Very funny with a great cast. Worth a watch.

Due for release this spring (fingers crossed).

Unforgotten Series 4 – ITV

Marcella Series 3 - ITV

Shetland Series 6 – BBC

Handy tip of the day: Download the

JustWatch app. It is a free streaming guide which will help you in a search for all your favourite TV and films.

Covering 22 providers, just tap in the name and it will show you where you can find it.

Esther Armitage

The Practical Gardener



Looking out from my study window at the garden at this time is not a very encouraging exercise. The ground is still very wet and probably this month it is best

to leave things as they are (maybe the first time I have written that). However, there are always things to do plus reflection and planning.


As I said last month, this is the time to start sowing – no not facemasks and that sort of stuff – this is the real start to the year. I have already sown sweet peas, broad beans, tomatoes and some herbs. It's so easy to do. But I do recommend a propagator, if not the kitchen windowsill.

I $\frac{3}{4}$ fill pots with ordinary compost which I break down with a gloved hand. Then I sieve seed compost to remove lumps and add maybe 1-2cm depth.



Ewa's Alterations

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Seeds are then added and covered as instructed on the packet. If the compost is dry, best to water before adding the seeds. Germination will start in about a week. Now, it's necessary to use some judgement. I have a greenhouse which is kept frost free, so when germination has happened and the little plants are 2cm tall, I move the pots to a more open and lighter place.

One of the problems at this time of year is controlling humidity in a greenhouse when it's often too cold to ventilate. I have at times used a small dehumidifier. I say this because some plants will rot if it's cold and damp. Maybe this is where the kitchen windowsill scores! Many herbs over-winter well outside but some like dill, basil and coriander are best sown afresh now. And be careful when you put them out to watch for slugs and snails. This is where a cold frame helps, so young plants still have some protection. This month, when frost is not about, is a good time for pruning and having a bonfire with all the usual precautions. My experience shows that most shrubs recover well, even after hard pruning and those which are very vigorous and start to take over parts of the garden need to be kept under control. It's also a good time to walk along boundaries and pay attention to fencing.

In November, I spread compost as a mulch. Now I can see a lot of small woody bits which I don't want, so I take a sieve and remove them as they were clearly too woody to compost quickly. If allowed, it's time to visit the garden centre and get seed potatoes and onion sets; these are two other crops which require little attention during the growing season. Easy!

Happy gardening.

Tony Gaster.

Breaking News....



Calum Barclay, second from left

You may remember in our October issue we spoke to valley resident Calum Barclay, as he was about to set off on a 3,000 mile row across the Atlantic Ocean in the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge. On 18 January, Calum and his three team mates arrived in Antigua after 37 days at sea!! Huge congratulations to Calum and the team and we look forward to hearing more about it when he's home,

Editors

Letter from the Rectory – February 2021



'It's too much.
It's just all too much'
It wouldn't be at all surprising if you felt this way at the moment.

Working from home is bad enough, the challenges of your business, the worry about your friends and relations who have the virus...will they make it? But now you are home schooling your children as well. Some of them don't want to engage with lessons on zoom. Some of them run riot as soon as you turn to your work. Your teenager

keeps throwing rugby balls around in the house or seems to be burrowed into their room and you cannot get them out for some fresh air and exercise. Things get said between you and the strongest of relationships suddenly looks shaky. You go to bed exhausted and wake with a sense of dread. When is it all going to end? Somehow knowing that many people in the cities in small flats in tower blocks are much worse off than you doesn't seem to help. You don't even have confidence that the politicians and their

advisers really know what is going to happen and how we are going to get out of this. What if the virus mutates again and the vaccines don't work? Fears grip you in the middle of the night.

Our nation has faced many great crises in its history from invasion, from civil war and indeed from disease. It is not at all surprising that we should face such a crisis in our own lifetimes. In all these great crises, both the country and individuals were faced with the realisation that the future was totally

Easton Village Hall Ina Williams 779465 or evh.booking@googlemail.com

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Martyr Worthy Village Hall

Lucinda Ffennell 779701 or martyrworthyvillagehall@gmail.com

Yoga	Sunday 1900 and Monday 1730	Sherin	See page 41
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outside their own control. In desperation, our people have always turned to their Creator to ask for help. We think particularly of May 1940 when our soldiers were surrounded at Dunkirk and it looked as if nothing could stop a Nazi invasion of Britain. The King led the nation in prayer. People flooded into their local churches. It was a turning point. By the following Tuesday Churchill had seen off the opposition in his War Cabinet (some of whom wanted to surrender) and we embarked on the colossally dangerous, but ultimately successful, strategy of fighting to the end. Prayer makes a difference. Whether it is the prayer by the nation or prayers by individuals. But we really need to mean it! We should put all our anxiety and fears and anguish into our prayers to God (whether or not we are church-goers). We should beg him for his protection over our families and our businesses. We should appeal to him for the recovery of our friends and relations who have Covid. Then we need to trust him that he has it all covered. This is ultimately what faith is - not a belief in a set of propositions - but trust in our heavenly Father that he is for us and will be with us in the challenges we face. As we pray more and more - every night as we go to sleep - every morning as we stir our morning tea or coffee - we will start to see things change and we will start to know his presence in our situation. Prayer by others can help as well. We have had many extraordinary answers to prayer in the parish over the last few years. If you are troubled at the moment or are worried about someone with Covid and would like Lucy and I and/or our confidential prayer team to pray for you and your friends or relations, then please do

contact me on
 rector@itchenvallychurches.org. For more about prayer during the Coronavirus crisis, how we might pray together as families, please see <https://www.24-7prayer.com/coronavirusprayer>
 Alex Pease
 Rector

IVN Annual Accounts 2020

The Itchen Valley News is run by local volunteers for the benefit of residents in the Valley area, to whom it is delivered free of charge.

The Editorial Team resolved when the first Lockdown was announced in March 2020 that every endeavour should be made to produce and deliver an edition every month as usual, within the constraints set by the Government. With many Valley events during the year cancelled or restricted, it was felt that the News had an especially

Itchen Valley News Income & Expenditure Account

	2020	2019
	£	£
Income		
Advertising	8,521	9,109
Readers' Contributions	113	128
Postal Fees	144	144
Interest	10	18
Sundry	-	-
Total Income	8,788	9,399
Expenditure		
Printing	10,520	10,033
Other Expenses	131	84
Total Expenditure	10,651	10,117
Surplus/ (Deficit) of Income over Expenditure	(1,863)	(718)
Year End Funds	7,169	9,032

important role to play in helping readers to keep in touch with their local community. In 2020 the circulation was also increased to include Abbots Worthy, in addition to the four villages of Easton, Martyr Worthy, Avington and Itchen Abbas. Some 850 copies of the magazine are now printed for delivery monthly.

For the second year in succession, there was no appeal to readers for a contribution to the ongoing costs. The Income and Expenditure Account for 2020 compared with 2019 is shown on the previous page. Advertising has declined slightly, attributed both to the hardening of the local business environment and more competition from other local publications. This trend is expected to be more pronounced in 2021. Printing costs have also risen slightly.

Looking forward, as announced a year ago, there will be an appeal for contributions in the Spring this year. This will be necessary to maintain the financial health of the IVN.

On behalf of all readers, well done to the whole team of volunteers for another successful year!

If you would like to help and get involved with the Itchen Valley News, or wish to send in a written contribution or a photograph, please send an email to The Editor at itchenvalleynews@gmail.com
Henry Labram, Treasurer

West Lea Farm Shop

Rachel Peppiatt - New owner of West Lea Farm Shop – talks us through her baptism of fire taking over a new business three months ago

How has it been taking on a business in the pandemic?

I don't really know what running this

business will be like without the pandemic! I took over from the previous owner in October last year and so I was very lucky in that I was able to build on what had already been done during the first lockdown. It has been the steepest of learning curves, but I have loved every minute (apart from our break-in).

Have you had to adapt in any unexpected way?

Well I have no idea yet how to run the shop when we are not in a pandemic, but certainly in lockdown it has been extremely hard to predict sales and adapt ordering accordingly. For example, one day we might sell out of bread in the first hour of trading and another day we might be left with bread at the end of the day. The predictability situation is the same for other farm shops, however, particularly in this lockdown.

Are you enjoying it? Yes, I absolutely love it!

What's the weirdest request you have had? Well that's tricky as I get requests all the time but I really try hard to source whatever I am asked, within reason. Quite weird and wonderful fruit and veg is my particular challenge sometimes.

What are people buying the most of? Definitely fresh and local produce. Our best sellers are fresh trout, quiches, watercress scones and hundreds of bunches of watercress. We are well known for watercress, because our shop sits on the beds so I am trying to encourage new suppliers to add watercress to their recipes, which has been a real success so far. Any ideas are very welcome.

Love your sign, who made it? It's great isn't it? The sign is made by a lovely company called Mint Signs in Twyford



Rachel Peppiatt, new owner of West Lea Farm Shop

Is the whole family involved? Yes definitely. My daughter Phoebe works three days a week and Pep (my husband and ex-chairman BBH) is our very hard working unpaid intern! Harry, my son, helps out when he can.

You are selling a lot of great local produce. What are the most exciting new local brands that you have come across? The Spice Girls mince pies and millionaires shortbread were a real hit during the Christmas period, Red Fox Fine Foods cheese soufflés have made a great start and Chalk Stream trout goodies always sell out. We are looking forward to stocking Giddy Nibbles, which is a novel way of cooking and eating cheesy treats.

Is there time for anything else? Well not really - I am in my final year of a psychology degree at Southampton University, very useful for understanding one's customers and I

also regularly teach Lotte Berk classes on Zoom, where many of my customers can be found.

Thanks Rach, sounds like you have the mind, body and spirit of food all covered. Can't wait to pop in again.

Valley Residents recommend.....

The Editors would like to thank the following contributors for sharing some exciting new additions to our local area - bring on some variety!

Flower Power

In December, I was looking for some Christmas table centre pieces and discovered an amazing local florist called Claudia & B. They made me two beautiful table decorations to match the colour scheme of my Christmas tree. When I picked them up, I met Meg Hunter and her mother at a social distance and am keen to spread the



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14th February 2021

10am Parish Communion via Zoom

21st February 2021

10am Valley Worship by Zoom

28th February 2021

10am Parish Communion via Zoom

During this time to make sure you receive updates from the parish, details of online services and how to join them, please become a follower of our website. On the bottom right hand corner of the site there is space to add your email address and to submit this, you will receive a confirmation email (this may go into junk) and once you have clicked on this you will receive all of our posts.

Rector - Revd Alex Pease

rector@itchenvalleychurches.org - 01962 779845

LLM - Mr Gerry Stacey

gerry.Stacey@biblesociety.org.uk - 07554 438973

Parish Administrator - Beccy Clark

admin@itchenvalleychurches.org - 01962 779845

www.itchenvalleychurches.org

word about this fantastic local small business.

Meg and her family have always lived locally in the Itchen Valley. Meg explained to me that she set up **Claudia & B** at the start of the pandemic. Before the pandemic, Meg had a career as a shoe designer for luxury brands in London. Her designs were featured on the front covers of Vogue and fashion runways. When the pandemic hit, Meg had to make the difficult decision to move back home to Winchester with her boyfriend. Meg and her mother, a freelance florist, then decided to make a long-lived



Meg, founder of Claudia & B

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dream a reality and set up their own floristry and homewares business.

Meg said that they started by putting bunches of their garden flowers outside their cottage, and the neighbours and walkers bought them immediately. They sold out from the very first day (Meg told me she and her mother did a celebratory dance for every sale watching out of the top window!!). And so from there, her business, Claudia & B began.

Meg now sources flowers from local flower farms wherever possible. She told me, "The growers we work with think of the environment in every aspect, the flowers are grown in the open and there isn't a chemical in sight, the flowers support the birds, bees and other vital insect life, all integral to British heritage."

Meg explained that during the first lockdown she and her Mum kept saying to each other, "I wish we could send a balloon in a box for birthdays" and after lots of research, they sourced the most amazing round balloons to which they add gorgeous tassels and bows. I sent three to my mother for her birthday and they looked gorgeous!

Meg also sells homewares and told me, "We are very selective in what we buy, we work with a lot of fair-trade companies and predominantly British suppliers to exhibit their talents through their products. This is a part of the business that we wish to continue to grow."

Claudia & B will be offering various workshops later this year, bookable on their website. Meg said, "We have a lot more in plan to develop Claudia & B for the next six months which is very



exciting, especially in such a terrible time everyone is experiencing at the moment. To put a smile on someone's face during this time is incredible and we love seeing the effect of the Claudia & B products on our customers."

Claudia & B can be found

on Instagram and at www.claudiaandb.co.uk.

Sophie Goodall

Delic...iously Open in Winchester

One of the few positives about the pandemic is the way in which it has made us focus on the local smaller businesses that feed us. The big supermarkets may have saved the day and kept the country going when it seemed that the essentials were about to disappear, but the local providers and the whole network of delivery services, Mutual Aid, churches, neighbours and 'pop up' organisers, such as First Bite and Red Radish, have been especially wonderful and they continue to serve. My sincere apologies to those I've not mentioned – pubs and curry houses deserve a 'thank you' too. We all have favourites – at least several – and one of mine is the **Open House Deli** in the centre of the city, where a flat white and toasted sandwich is a regular feature of my normal week. Apparently, they have won awards for their salads, cakes, soups all made in a "sustainable and eco-friendly kitchen in Winchester".

In response to the current restrictions they are now delivering every Friday to Alresford and Itchen Valley. You have to order online at www.openhousedeli.co.uk for their deli goodies, seasonal fruit + veg boxes, local produce and other stuff, and they



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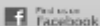
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There was an old fellow called Eugene
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He asked on the quiet

Do jabs count as part of my protein?.

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Of course, I'd rather be sitting in the café and bumping into friends, but this is not a bad substitute which will also help ensure that the café is still there when the medical side of the crisis comes to end, hopefully very soon.

Kim Gottlieb

A welcome addition to the Neigh....bourhood

I have written on the Itchen List, but I just wanted to say what a lifeline the Chestnut Horse Shop is, in these most strange and difficult days. Whenever one goes to the shop, Callum Bodle is always so cheerful and accommodating and if he does not have something in the shop, then he will get it for one. A real lifeline, when we are asked not to travel and wonderful when one can combine a walk with doing one's shopping. Thank you Callum.

Penelope Kellie

Alcoholic biscuits anyone?



I'd never heard of these delicacies either until something went wrong with a chocolate mousse. My good old Hamlyn All

Colour Cookery Book had a recipe I'd never tried before for a chocolate cream dessert. Following the instructions, I melted the chocolate, added the butter and then the sugar. Alas, the butter melted but the sugar remained as tiny undissolved crystals. Fortunately I stopped at that point and started again with a fresh lot of ingredients, this time using golden syrup instead of sugar. And the

resulting mousse was excellent.

But what to do with my crunchy mixture? I ground up some rich tea biscuits and added them to the re-melted sugary mix, hoping that they would disguise the crunchy texture. I waited for the mixture to set but alas, the consistency was unchanged.

I left it overnight and then considered the options. I needed something to dissolve the sugar but water and chocolate don't usually mix. In the end I went for my bottle of Cointreau, always a useful standby in the kitchen, and added a tablespoonful to the warmed up mix. Almost instant success. The sugar dissolved and the mixture once more set hard when cooled.

I now had a pile of alcoholic biscuits, the Cointreau taking away some of the original sweetness and making them really delicious. An excellent result from a disappointing beginning.

Sue Sheph

Perhaps a useful recipe for all those parents currently home-schooling young children, together with some wise words from Winnie the Pooh: "It is more fun to talk with someone who doesn't use long, difficult words but rather short, easy words like "What about lunch? A. A. Milne



A rather sheepish social gathering spotted in Avington

Lockdown Yoga for Students available online!



Help is at hand for students struggling with education stress during lockdown. A local yoga teacher is

offering online classes to help adolescents struggling to cope with stress and anxiety. Classes are in response to delays to the start of the term. They are targeted at GCSE and A-Level students, or anxious students in other school years, and university students struggling with online learning and acclimatising to living on their own. Dionne Sanders, a qualified teen yoga instructor from Easton, works with the Teen Yoga Foundation and says: "I feel so much empathy for teens today. I want to do all I can to make their lives easier during the Covid pandemic. The Teen Yoga Foundation has a number of teen yoga teachers across the UK and the world who specialise in teaching yoga and mindfulness to adolescents. There are a myriad of benefits for young people who live in such a fast-paced, uncertain world. Yoga can aid relaxation, improve focus and concentration, aid sleep, reduce anxiety, promote confidence, enhance compassion, raise self-esteem, and encourage better self regulation." Dionne offers a household membership that provides classes for tweens, teens and adults of all levels and intensity for £30 per month per household. This membership also includes access to a recorded library of classes, packed with a variety of classes and mini tutorials.

This also enables students to work around their studying timetables. Find out more at www.dionneyoga.com
The Eds



Local monthly information

Itchen Valley area waste collections in February

Black bins and brown garden bins on Fridays 12 and 26 February. Green bins on Friday 5 and 19 February. Glass boxes on Friday 5 February.

Farmers Market in Winchester

Sunday 14 and 28 February.

Parish Council Full Meeting

Thursday 4 February. Via Zoom

67 Bus operated by Stagecoach.

These timings changed significantly in January.

Monday to Saturday to Winchester:
12:23 14:23 17:23

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