

# Valley<sup>ITCHEN</sup> News

Issue 91 July 2021

For Avington, Eaton, Itchen Abbas and Martyr Worthy



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# WELCOME to the Valley News



When the IVN editorial board (sounds grand!) met in person recently for the first time for a year, we discussed the fact that the front covers had tended to show plants and non-human animals, and it was time for some people to make an appearance. However, the redesign of Junction 9 and the M3/A34/A33 links is going to be hugely important to everyone living or working in the Valley so we are taking every opportunity to alert you to the consultation which **ends on 8 July**. Our various representatives have written about it but none of them is telling you what to think. We have printed the diagram showing the roads and proposed cycle and walking routes on the centre pages (22-23). Much more information is available on-line [www.highwaysengland.co.uk/m3junction9](http://www.highwaysengland.co.uk/m3junction9).

What's On is still thin but there are events to look forward to, both in the Valley and outside. Boom Village on 12 - 15 August is advertised on page 6 and the Liberation Party in Easton is planned for 11 September (page 5). Neither of the two biggest world concerns gets much mention in this edition of the Valley News. The climate doesn't get a look-in, biodiversity is mentioned (wild flower verges p20), but I regret that there is not more on this most important broad topic. Please consider writing something for the magazine about what you and your family are doing to reduce your carbon (and other important greenhouse gases) footprint. Maybe this could be a holiday project for teens - good CV material!

I don't suppose anyone regrets the lack of mention of the other elephant in the room - what can one say about 'it' (am I feeling that not naming 'it' will make it go away, or at least not return with renewed vigour?) that doesn't risk being out of date by the time the News reaches your doormat?

You will see that the News is in need of another part time editor or two (page 10). Do consider it. It is probably the least time-consuming volunteer role you could take on, requiring only a few days' work every 3 or 4 months. Fi and Lucy showed how well it could work as a partnership.

Next month's editor is Verity Coleman. Stay safe and happy holidays.  
*Charlotte Appleby*

## Itchen Valley News

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Cover design Penny Russell and other photos from various contributors.

## What's On

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Not very much, unfortunately, but see the Save the Date box on page 28 and various posters.

Note that the M3/Jn9 consultation ends on **8 July**.

## Hat Fair 2021

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PLAY  
TO THE  
CROWD

Art & Education Online  
Festival

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HAT  
FAIR

PLAYMAKERS

It's all systems go - we're going ahead as planned! We're thrilled to say, following the government's announcement earlier this week that the lifting of the final Covid restrictions has been delayed until 19 July, that the Hat Fair will go ahead as planned on **Friday 2 - Sunday 4 July**.

The event has been organised to comply with the current level of Covid restrictions. To make this year's festival Covid secure for everyone, all three days of the event will take place at North Walls Recreation Ground and the adjacent Winchester School of Art Car Park, and the event will be ticketed. This allows us to limit the number of audiences and, to prevent people coming into close contact with others, rather than the 'hatters' passing a hat around for money after their



performance, the hatters will be paid a fee from the ticket monies raised.

Tickets can be purchased online <https://www.hatfair.co.uk/get-tickets>

or from the Box Office at Theatre Royal Winchester. You can call the Box Office on 01962 840 440 (Box Office is open Tue-Sat, 10am-1pm).

We look forward to seeing you at Hat Fair 2021!

## Boules 2021

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The boules season began tentatively this year. The covid restrictions eased a little in mid-May. Rain was very disruptive for the next fortnight. However this then changed, and the first round of the inter-village league matches duly took place on Tuesday 1 June, with Avington at home to Martyr Worthy and Easton at home to Itchen Abbas.

All teams may have felt a little out of practice, but, in glorious sunshine, players and supporters enjoyed the opportunity to meet up again. The score in both matches was similar, with Easton and Avington both winning their respective matches by 3 games to 1.

The second round is on **Tuesday 13 July**.

*Ralph Matthews*

*The evening was obviously a riotous occasion, so much so that our IVN reporter forgot to take a photo! - Ed*

## Tennis

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As of Monday 14 June, after a break of about 15 months, Worthy Park Tennis Club has returned to its home at Prince's Mead School from 6pm weekday evenings and from 8am until dark at weekends.


If you have ever considered joining as a member, NOW is a great time.



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7 PM



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Our Level 3 coach, Rachel Magory will  
be running a few courses to start with  
whilst we re-establish ourselves.

For 6 weeks starting Tuesday 15 and  
Wednesday 16 June

Tuesdays 6.30-8pm: Adult mix-in/drills  
£60 for all six sessions or £12 pay and  
play per session (min 4 / max 8).

Wednesdays 6-7pm: Kids 6-8 yrs old

£42 for all six sessions. Wednesdays  
7.15pm-8.15pm: Adults skills and drills  
£48 for all six sessions or £10 pay and  
play per session.

Please message Rachel on  
07501 016217

N.B. COVID measures will be in place  
and the Club politely requests that you  
abide by them please for the safety not  
only of our fellow Club  
Members, but also for  
the Staff & children at  
Princes Mead School.





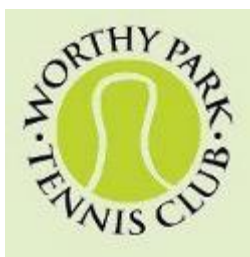
*AN INTIMATE FESTIVAL CELEBRATION, PACKED WITH MUSIC, CREATIVITY & CELEBRATION.*

Welcome to our spin-off festival, **Boom Village**, brought to you by the team behind Boomtown. Since making the difficult decision to postpone our 60,000 capacity Boomtown: The Gathering until 2022, we've been busy using the abundance of creativity within our team to come up with the perfect solution to the current conundrum and complex puzzle of putting on live events in the UK at the moment. For one year only, we bring you, **Boom Village**!

This one-off mini-event for all the family will be hosted in our beautiful home of Matterley Estate in the South Downs and tickets are available exclusively for those living in Hampshire or in the South Downs National Park Area. Boom Village will focus on fun and freedom for all generations, trying out new environmental initiatives and resetting the foundations of how to put on a truly sustainable festival for future years. As well as great food and drink, a musical soundtrack fitting for the 'third summer of love' and of course, all the curious and charismatic characters that we've come so accustomed to within our Boomtown world...

Join us and be part of the show that was never meant to happen, but will be remembered forever...

<https://www.boomtownfair.co.uk/boom-village/tickets/>



Non - Members welcomed but please add £2 per session (£12 for the course). Join the sessions at any

time! Just pay and play!

Thank you and hopefully see you on court soon.

Jenny Sloan

Acting Chairman Worthy Park Tennis Club

## Easton Village Hall & Recreation Ground – welcome back!

On 17 May the Hall re-opened to our regular class users, with all appropriate Covid Secure precautions in place, and we hope that on 19 July we will be able to accept bookings from all potential users, although, of course, we await news from the Government with regard to this.

Ina Williams, having given of her time

tirelessly over the last 10 years as Bookings Secretary for the Hall, has stepped down from that role and from the management committee; we owe her a huge debt of thanks for her contribution to both roles.

The role of Bookings Secretary has been taken over by Helen Smyth, and we are most grateful to her for doing so – she will now be responding to emails sent to [evh.booking@googlemail.com](mailto:evh.booking@googlemail.com) and has a dedicated mobile number, which is 07308 863972.

The Village Hall website [www.eastonvillagehall.co.uk](http://www.eastonvillagehall.co.uk) remains active and is the process of being updated, to include an online bookings and bookings management system, which should streamline the hall bookings process for all.

The AGM, which usually takes place in May, will take place in November this year, as it did in 2020, but then will revert to May in 2022.

Meanwhile, as many of you will have noticed, the new storage facility at the rear of the Hall is now complete, and we are grateful to our friends at the Cricket Club for the work they have put in to improve the landscaping and access from the playing field.

During the summer, we plan to organise a village working party to move and reorganise items currently stored in the Village Hall loft into the Village Hall storeroom. We plan also to address the safety issue of access to the loft space by installing a proper staircase.

It is a slow return to normality, but we are so glad to welcome back our regular users and look forward to opening fully when allowed.

*EVH & RG Committee,  
Harry Smith, Secretary*

## CAMEO - Come and Meet Each Other

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Virtual CAMEO continues, we now hope to be able to resume our lunches in August - on the 3rd Tuesday of course, but nothing is certain in these times. If we can go ahead then, Andrew Micklefield will be coming to take the service; we will all be glad to see him again. The helpers team did manage to have an outdoor tea party - oops, of course I mean a serious meeting - while the weather was so fine, to plan the June goodies. What should it be in June but strawberries, with meringues made by some of our willing cooks.



If you would like to know more about CAMEO and perhaps join us, do please give me a ring.

*Charlotte Appleby 779 778*

## Reflections on 15 years in the Valley

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Within a few months and with some sadness, we shall be leaving this community to live in town. Simply, we need to be in walking distance of a shop and on a reliable bus route. I came to know the Valley through the Church and have had close connections and worked in different capacities over



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time. Our four village churches have changed little and are well cared for and kept in good order. But the ministry of the Church is not about buildings.



Christian witness is strong here and alive in the community thanks to a very large group of committed people. However, over time, I have seen that fewer are either willing or able to give time to some tasks, meaning these now must be paid for. In an increasingly regulated and bureaucratic world, such tasks have to be done and done properly.

The Valley is changing and I see an increasing influence of city life here. It can be seen in the high fences and big gates which are not part of country life. It can also be heard from the daily noise of chain saws. It seems sad to me that here any tree can be cut down and nobody is expected to plant a new one. Trees are an essential part of country. They are vital for our environment, ecology and our vista.

Of our four villages, I know most about Itchen Abbas, where I live. We have always had good neighbours, who are both helpful and friendly, part, I feel, of a lovely community. However, I also see fewer folk involved in village life. Witness the Flower Show, which for so many years was a big event. Now it's difficult to find people to volunteer for the important tasks of organising.

We have the most wonderful village hall. Happily, it is well-managed, financially sound and a hive of all sorts of activity. It is a central feature of this community and I have no doubt that at Easton and Martyr Worthy, the same situation exists. I sense it's also less easy today to find willing volunteers for the many tasks.

I have witnessed the ups and downs of the village pub over 15 years. Now, after a few years, it has been updated and is well-managed. I feel it has been vital in these difficult times to support our local. Again, the village pub is such a focal point and a place to meet people.

People often talk about the peace and quiet of the countryside. That was certainly true when I lived in rural Shropshire, but not here. I have experienced almost non-stop building activity around me for 10 years with all the noise and dust. Most practical people today use motorised tools for everything and I must admit to being one. I have an extremely noisy brick cutter. Garden machinery today is noisy. The country is not quiet.

We have owned a dog for most of the time we have been here and therefore walking in the community is a basic need and often a joy. Yet some of our footpaths are overgrown and uncared for. Now I don't want to enter a debate on who owns what and who should do what. To most people, a path where one is allowed to walk is a footpath and we should surely expect it to be looked after. Sometimes, when this does not happen, the responsibility sometimes lies with the owner of the land. I know that our Parish Council works tirelessly on such issues.

Some years ago, I became involved in a committee that was to produce a new Parish Plan. I remember one of the issues discussed was the lack of suitable housing. It was a very pretty document, yet we are a long way from some of the objectives. By and large, homes here are getting bigger. Tough for anyone looking for a two bedroomed home.

This is a truly beautiful place and long may that continue.

*Tony Gaster*

## New editors needed for this magazine

When Tony Gaster stepped down earlier this year as one of our monthly editors, I wrote an appeal asking for a replacement. Alas nobody stepped forward.

I also approached various readers in person to ask if they might like to take up the challenge but again, nul points.

Fortunately, Tony's move to Winchester was postponed for several months and he has temporarily re-joined the fold.

However, as you will have read in the June issue of the Itchen Valley News, Fi McIntosh and Lucy Wolfe have now had to withdraw as editors because they are so busy with other new ventures. And Tony will, eventually, be moving later this year. At which point the magazine will be left with just two monthly editors.

So I must now repeat my appeal for help. If you ever had any wish to start writing or to set about creating something you can hold in your hand and be proud of, now is your opportunity to stand up and be counted.

If you would like to get involved, please do contact me through the magazine inbox. [itchenvalleynews@gmail.com](mailto:itchenvalleynews@gmail.com)

Many thanks

Vernon Tottle, Chief Editor

*It is honestly quite a fun challenge and the IT skills needed would be a doddle to anyone under - well, perhaps I had better not specify an age. The meetings are friendly and fun and we are going to have an editors' party soon! - Ed of the month*



## Walk 4 Martyr Worthy - Easton - Kings Worthy

5 miles/ 8 km loop can extend to 7 miles, or shorten

Start: Chestnut Horse pub Easton SO21 1EG

what3words: candle.remove.clerk.

This pleasant wander along the banks of the Itchen is mainly in the furthest north west corner of The South Downs National Park. It includes three of the picturesque Worthy villages: Martyr, Abbots and Kings and glimpses of the old Watercress Line. It is served by three pubs and a cafe: The Chestnut Horse, Cricketers, Cart and Horses and Winchester Coffee Roasters. Check their websites for opening hours/bookings.

There are a few stiles along the way and multiple kissing gates. Stout footwear recommended for wetter periods. There are often grazing cattle, please keep dogs on leads and remove any deposits!

Place names detective:

- Easton's name originates from Old English: tun is an enclosure / farmstead / village/estate. The earliest recorded mention is in 871. The oldest building is St Mary's Church, but there are many 16th C. cottages.

- Worthy probably comes from Wordie, Anglo Saxon for part of an estate. There are four in Hampshire, recorded by the Domesday Survey. Kings, Headbourne, Abbots, and Martyr are all linked to 12th C. Winchester St Swithun's monastery, probably a royal estate dating back to Roman times. Indeed, these villages are on the line of the Roman Road Silchester to Winchester which we now know as the A33.

From the Chestnut Horse follow a



narrow footpath to the north side of the pub heading west towards Easton Lane through paddocks and a newly established flower farm. On the left is a complex of mainly 18th C. buildings, part of the original Manor Farm, established in medieval times.

Turn left after the last kissing gate along Easton Lane (no pavements) towards The Cricketers Pub. Cross the road with the small grass triangle on your left, up Church Lane. The triangle is thought to be the last vestige of the village common. On the left is the imposing Dymoke House, rebuilt in the late 18th C. partly by stones recycled from a house demolished in the 1780s. On the right, on the top of the river terrace lies St Mary's Church, a Grade I Listed Building, c.1200. It is the oldest and largest church in the Itchen Valley. Spot its iconic late Norman doorway facing south. Its 12th C. windows in the north wall were reglazed in the early 1900s.

Just after The Old School House, built

in 1840, take a footpath right, diagonally across the grassy recreation field. Several kissing gates lead down past the private river banks. Look out for herons and even cormorants, lured by fish farms upstream. The 28 mile River Itchen is one of just 200 or so chalk rivers globally. It was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1979, to help conserve its rich mosaic of wildlife including otters, water voles, lapwings, sedges and orchids. It also has wild watercress (do not eat, danger of liver fluke!). Much of the meadows have been managed by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Trust since 2018. They use docile British White cattle to help increase biodiversity by gentle trampling. Follow the footpath along the right hand, northern edges of a large field until just before the M3, where a sharp right takes you to an underpass. Follow this path as it winds westwards along one of many small branches of the Itchen, created centuries ago to feed



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local corn and cloth mills. Turn sharp right in front of The Fulling Mill, where fullers earth clay was beaten into cloth to make a closer weave. Pass by the front of the house, effectively through its garden, over several small wooden footbridges. **DOGS ON LEADS PLEASE!**

This path heads NW across the undulating floodplain meadows with the lumps and bumps of a deserted medieval village to a bridge over the Itchen, at the bottom of Mill Hill. Pause at the interpretation board at the bottom of Mill Lane, near the old ford entrance. Turn left on the footpath signed The Watercress, Itchen and Pilgrims Way along a small ditch and through scrubby woodland called 'carr'. Look for glimpses of Abbots Worthy House to the right. This was built for the Baring family in the early 19th C. but in Tudor style. Lord Eversley lived here, a Victorian cabinet minister; more about him in Kings Worthy!

Go up a small ramp (the left hand fork is best) to cross the A33 dual carriageway. **DANGEROUS CROSSING!** Turn right alongside the carriageway on a pavement until the footpath sign on the left to Kings Worthy Post Office. You pass some Victorian alms houses and a Reading Room.

Cross the busy B3047 (pedestrian crossing to the right) to the left of the Cart and Horses Pub. The Cart & Horses was a farmhouse, converted to a pub in 1760. For a coffee shop open Friday -Sunday, walk a short distance west past St Mary's Church and small recreation ground to Winchester Coffee Roasters, opposite the Volvo garage, then return to The Post Office. Carry on along the pavement to the left of the A33 and turn first left up

tree lined Hinton House drive. To the left is a field of grass and scrub which was the site of Kings Worthy House, its lodge and gardens. This was the grand Victorian residence of Richard Turner, a local benefactor (you passed his Reading Rooms and Alms houses by the Post Office). It became derelict and burned down in the 1960's. To the right you see glimpses of the 2018 award winning HAB eco homes called Eversley Gardens and herb rich meadowland planted in 2018, which you will walk through on the home stretch.

Cross Eversley Recreation Ground heading north east towards the social club. Make sure you see one of its interpretation boards. Eversley Park was named after Lord Eversley, an early advocate of public access to open spaces and footpaths. This was the site of The Whiteway, an ancient livestock drovers route linking Winchester & Basingstoke, and had an important WWII role too. Just behind the Social Club is a footpath which goes right to Lovedon Lane.

(For a shorter circular route, turn right down Lovedon Lane to cross over to Park Lane, Mill Lane and then the Watercress Way signs direct you left back to Easton.)

Turn sharp left up Lovedon Lane, over the old Mid-Hants Watercress Line railway bridge, filled in with earth from the M3 cutting at Twyford Down. Narrow pavement here. Take the first footpath to the left just after the railway bridge, through a kissing gate. Walk down Broadview to Wesley Rd and the Millennium mosaic interpretation board. Broadview indeed: This is on top of a very deep infilled cutting of the Mid-Hants Railway. It has stunning views west

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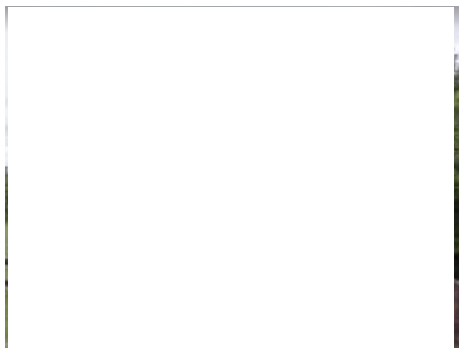
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across to Winchester including the site of a Roman villa at Woodhams Farm. Imagine workers called 'Navvies' as young as seven years old, hand cutting the hard chalk in the 1860s, and JCBs filling it in to dispose of M3 waste in the late 1980s.

Habitats: in all the disused railway sections, active management by the Worthys' Conservation Volunteers, Watercress Way trustees and friends and Hampshire County Council is needed to maintain clear access and improve habitat diversity by layering the shrubs and creating glades.

*(To extend your walk by 1.75 miles to see the other disused track bed: the Didcot-Newbury-Southampton Railway {DN&SR} walk further west into Kings Worthy and follow the Watercress Way signs. You continue down Broadview to access The Kim Bishop Way and what locals call 'Top Field or Hookpit, a new social housing development of 2020. In 2020 new access was negotiated by the Watercress Way charity to reach more of the Watercress Line track bed from Wesley Road all the way to Winchester Junction. This was its junction with the main London to Southampton railway via Basingstoke. You will end up at Woodhams Farm to access the deep South-North cutting of the old DN&SR. You then drop down*

*off the high embankment at Two Bridges, to go under the twin bridges along Hookpit Farm Lane until Burnett Lane, then back up to Top Fields to re-join the Kim Bishop Way and Broadview.)*

To return directly to Easton, turn left along Wesley Road, and then left into Frampton Road, Gillingham Close and then take the first footpath to the right into Eversley Recreation Ground again. Walk along the left hand side of the park to access the new housing development of 'Eco houses' called Eversley Gardens. A footpath leads all around the meadow to exit onto Lovedon Lane. Turn right towards the A33. The A33, before the 1980s, took all the traffic from London to Southampton and on to the Winchester by-pass. And back in 50BC, you would have seen Romans passing! Cross the A33 and walk down Park Lane. No pavements, narrow road. The road is named after Worthy Park and its farm which used to be to the left beyond the woods. On the right is a large Victorian redbrick house- one of several Rectories around the village (not all in use at the same time!). Cross the B3047 and carry on down Mill Lane, past beautiful, thatched 17th C. cottages and take the first footpath to the left, opposite your original turn to Kings Worthy. Go through some paddocks slightly uphill, following Watercress Way signs now back to Easton and Martyr Worthy.

You get glimpses of Worthy Park on the left, now Prince's Mead School. This imposing house was built in 1829, another listed building. This has an Anglo Saxon cemetery dating from the 5th/6th C. From this period onwards both Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy were established as small agricultural communities close to the

River Itchen. Mill Lane, Abbots Worthy, was first referred to in the Anglo-Saxon Charter of AD961.

There is a narrow grassy area alongside the B3047, no pavement, for a few metres before a footpath to the right takes you downhill to the river, with fields on the left. Just before the M3 is a gate stile and then an underpass. The path takes a sharp left to a kissing gate and then a right with the field boundary to the right, then a kissing gate so the boundary fence is on the left, heading east. (Beware: often grazing cattle). One more kissing gate to reach Easton Lane. Cross over, with Newbridge Cottage to the left.

(You can divert to go straight back into Easton by Easton Lane.)

The footpath passing Newbridge Cottage winds around several fields through kissing gates until Church Lane, Martyr Worthy. A short diversion left up Church Lane (no pavement, quiet road) is worth doing to see another Norman church: St Swithun's. There is a Pilgrims Way sign of a scallop shell engraved in its churchyard wall. The church was modified by the Victorians. To return to Easton, turn right and go downhill to cross the main Itchen via a spectacular Monet style bridge. Look for spotty brown trout and grayling (dark, with a spine), ducks and swans. See the interpretation board, with its changing display according to seasons. Follow the footpath to a small bridge (dogs have access to water here) and a small metal gate into meadows. Beware: often cattle grazing. The path bears right then left through another metal gate, a gravel drive and then onto the road. Turn right on Avington Road, no pavements, to return to The Chestnut Horse.

*Kim Adams*

## From our MP

---

Firstly, it was an absolute pleasure to bring our energetic new Police & Crime Commissioner – Donna Jones – to the area for a special BEAT surgery with local police officers. We spent a busy evening outside East Stratton Village Hall where any policing matters could be raised by residents across the Itchen and Dever Valley. Illegal trap racing along the A33 was a key topic and our PCC went away with a clear message that we expect a comprehensive plan in place for any future events. And we are both clear, people from outside our area will not come here to use our roads as a race-track.



Secondly, I am reportedly a “rebel” again after backing our own 0.7% official development assistance target. That is, for those who don't know, the policy whereby the UK spends 0.7% of gross national income on overseas aid. It remains something I am incredibly proud of and, while I totally accept not everyone agrees with the concept of even having an aid budget, I have seen first-hand the amazing work this country is able to support on behalf of some of the poorest people on earth. The current argument is whether we should make savings from this budget, and drop from 0.7% to 0.5% for a period while we recover from the worst effects of the pandemic. My judgment is we should not but, if we do, we have to set a clear date for its return. Every other G7 country is maintaining its commitment and while the saving (some £4bn) is a lot of money, it means a lot more to the





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places it goes to help than it does to our relatively rich nation. As I always say to those who disagree with me on this subject, charity does begin at home; it just does not end there. Finally, it was a real treat to visit the Morn Hill Camp just off Long Walk near Easton recently where students from the University of Winchester Archaeology team were at work. They were uncovering the prison stockade which formed part of the World War One camp for departing soldiers when young William and I dropped by.



It's so moving to think these quiet fields of the Itchen Valley were, for many, the last glimpse of England before they headed off to the battlefields of the First World War across the Channel.

Please find much more of my work, locally and in Westminster, at [www.SteveBrine.com](http://www.SteveBrine.com) but please follow me on Facebook for more instant updates: [www.fb.com/SteveBrineMP](https://www.facebook.com/SteveBrineMP)  
Steve Brine

*MP for Winchester & Itchen Valley*

## From our City Councillors

### M3 / Junction 9 scheme

No doubt residents of the Itchen Valley will have noticed the revised scheme for Junction 9 of the M3 that is proposed. The original scheme was widely



criticised for its dangerous reliance on prompt lane changes for traffic moving wishing to diverge unto the A33. The revised scheme has overcome that particular problem or at least so it appears to my inexperienced eye.

This new junction is considered to be a NISP (Nationally Important Infrastructure Project). Copious information is available at the [highwaysengland](http://highwaysengland) website. Just search for "m3 junction 9". There is an aerial fly-through video with comments and several drawings, plus extension appendices on environmental impact etc. The website gives details on how to take part in a webinar and how to leave comments.

It is a complicated interchange and it is quite hard to follow the movements needed to move across the three routes in all directions (A34/M3/A33 moving both north and south.) I found it easier to understand the scheme from the drawing and I found the video a bit confusing, with notes fading in and out. I think it is worth remembering that cars, trucks and buses are going to be with us for the foreseeable future even though the internal combustion engine will be replaced by electric engines or hydrogen powered ones. I imagine one of local residents' main

concerns will be the present long queues on the Spitfire Link waiting to access the Winnall roundabout. These are caused by the lights being set to give longer pulses for traffic coming off the M3 to access the A34 north. The new scheme will allow this flow to be reduced as vehicles can access the A34 directly off the M3; this will reduce flow onto the roundabout and should give shorter waiting times from the Spitfire Link.

The revised scheme is supposed to provide improved cycle routes and pedestrian connections. The solution for the proposed pedestrian and cycle connection from Winnall to Kings Worthy is to squeeze the route between the northbound and southbound carriageways of the A34. If you look at the Walking and Cycle Routes plan you will understand how uncomfortable this route will be. The east to west route proposed for the shared pedestrian and cycle path is also uncomfortable as the routes descend below the roundabout and then via a bridge over the M3 carriageways before climbing back via another subway to ground level on the Winnall side. This route is not markedly different from the existing route, but surely with all the benefits given to vehicles, it would be good to offer something much better, since we are supposedly being encouraged to be leaving our cars at home.

I would urge you to submit your comments to the website. I would be very happy to hear your views too. They will help me to push for improvements. Space does not allow me to go onto the additional topics of noise and visual intrusion, but I hope to deal with these issues in the future.

*Russell Gordon -Smith 01962 733219*

*Margot Power 01962 734167*

## **Perins School crossing**

This has been an issue for many years. As there are students who travel from the Itchen Valley area to Perins, I thought it would be useful to let



you know what I have done recently on this. After witnessing several issues recently and being in contact with many parents regarding this, I met with Steve Brine MP and members of Perins School before meeting Cllr Humby from HCC with Steve Brine, members of Perins and some parents, at the site to witness some of the issues. I was pleased that some actions were taken away including looking at alternative sites for some buses to stop at rather than the crossing, making it extra difficult and dangerous. I posted a video on my Facebook page (Cllr Fiona Isaacs) clearly showing some of the dangers. New bus contracts will be taking place in September and a more unified system is believed to be planned. Some action points for further reports are planned.

On highways more generally, some discussions have taken place during some recent Parish Council meetings of a cross parish highways group. Welcomed by many, but having representation of all parties was fed back as important to ensure key data was captured and working together is key.

## **Police and Crime issues**

I have invited our new Police and Crime Commissioner, Donna Jones, up to Alresford and Itchen Valley to visit us and discuss some of our local issues. Please do let me know if you have any specific issues, thank you to those who have already fed back.

*Fiona Isaacs fisaacs@winchester.gov.uk*

## The power of yellow rattle

---

For many of us interested in changing existing turf into a more diverse habitat, yellow rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) is the eco warrior of choice! Thick grass is very successful in screening out any other plants, which means the flowering plants and the finer grasses don't get a look in. The cowslips, buttercups, ox eye daisies and orchids need to be given some space to emerge and thrive. And that means weaker grass, which is where the yellow rattle comes in. It's a pretty plant in its own right, and it is partly parasitic on grass, which means as it spreads it weakens the grass cover and allows space for itself and for other species.



The photo shows the result of yellow rattle sown last autumn onto scrapes of bare ground, stamped in hard, helping Brigid McManus's wonderful wild patch to get going in Itchen Abbas, including the speedwell. The yellow rattle is also establishing well in Martyr Worthy churchyard. Wild Valley Verges will be able to supply seed this year if you would like to have a go on a verge or elsewhere.

*Verity Coleman*

## From the Parish Council.

---

Like many, we were hoping to get back to being near to operating normally before the end of June but the four week delay in easing lockdown restrictions has meant that working under delegated powers has had to continue. As soon as we are able, for the first time for over a year, we will hold a Full Council Meeting in person. It is hoped that this may be possible in the second half of July. Please keep an eye on our website and parish notice board for when and where a meeting will take place.

One item on the agenda of that meeting will be the co-option of a new councillor. There has already been interest from more than one person. If you are interested in applying please request an application form from the Clerk. (See our website for contact details).

Despite not being able to meet, progress and plans continue. Thanks to help from one of our local farmers and a small group of volunteers, chippings from trees cut down on the Watercress way have been spread to cover the muddy area near the south end of Strawberry Lane. The barrier to the car park at Couch Green has been rebuilt and restored to full working order. At long last the notice board near the bus shelter at Couch Green has been refurbished, fitted with new posts and put back in place. Further along the B3047 the bench in memory of Jean and Gerald Dunn has been installed and looks very smart. Still awaited is the new trampoline for the Old School Field at Easton.

An event in the pipeline to be aware of is Boom Village. This is a smaller event which will replace the already cancelled Boom Town festival. It will take place



on the Matterley Estate from 12 to 15 August. Details can be found on their website.



With summer reaching its height, vegetation is growing rapidly. The Parish Council uses the lengthsman to keep open as many paths as possible. When funding allows, the lengthsman is employed for extra days above those funded by the County Council. However a number of paths are rights of way across private land and it is the responsibility of owners to see that they are kept clear. It is a help if this is done before we start to get complaints and are obliged to send out requests for paths to be cleared. Still on the subject of footpaths but looking back to last winter and forward to the next, there is concern that the level of mud becomes so bad on well used paths that they are rendered almost impassable. It is therefore pleasing to report that the County Council is providing funding to put all-weather surfaces on some of the worst affected paths. The Parish Rights of Way Group is in the process of looking at the detail and deciding an order of priority. Most households in the Valley should have received a leaflet regarding the latest proposals for improvement to junction 9 of the M3. Hopefully everyone who is interested has looked at the information provided on line. Studying the layout on a small computer screen can be difficult and Covid restrictions have prevented drop-in meetings which were held as part of previous consultations. Hard copies are available from Highways

England on request and I have a copy if anyone wishes to come and look at it. Several parish councillors have participated in the webinars. This has been useful. A key point to note is that the road layout has been significantly improved since the previous plan. Our concerns on safety have been addressed and as part of the plan the A33 between the Winnall roundabout and the Cart and Horses junction will be entirely separate from the A34. It also has the advantage that accessing the M3 northbound from the Valley and Kings Worthy will not require going up to the Winnall roundabout. Environmental assessments are still underway. Once construction is complete it is estimated at present that any increase in noise level will be too small to be noticed. Footpaths and Cycle paths are giving concern to some as are the areas where unneeded spoil may be deposited. Depending on where these deposits are located, and their size, they may have an impact on the views of open land between Easton and the motorway. The Parish Council will be submitting their comments on these proposals but remember we are only one voice. Comments submitted by individual residents are just as important. Therefore if you wish to respond to this latest consultation please do so via:-

Online: [www.highwaysengland.co.uk/m3junction9](http://www.highwaysengland.co.uk/m3junction9). Email: [M3Junction9Improvements@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:M3Junction9Improvements@highwaysengland.co.uk)

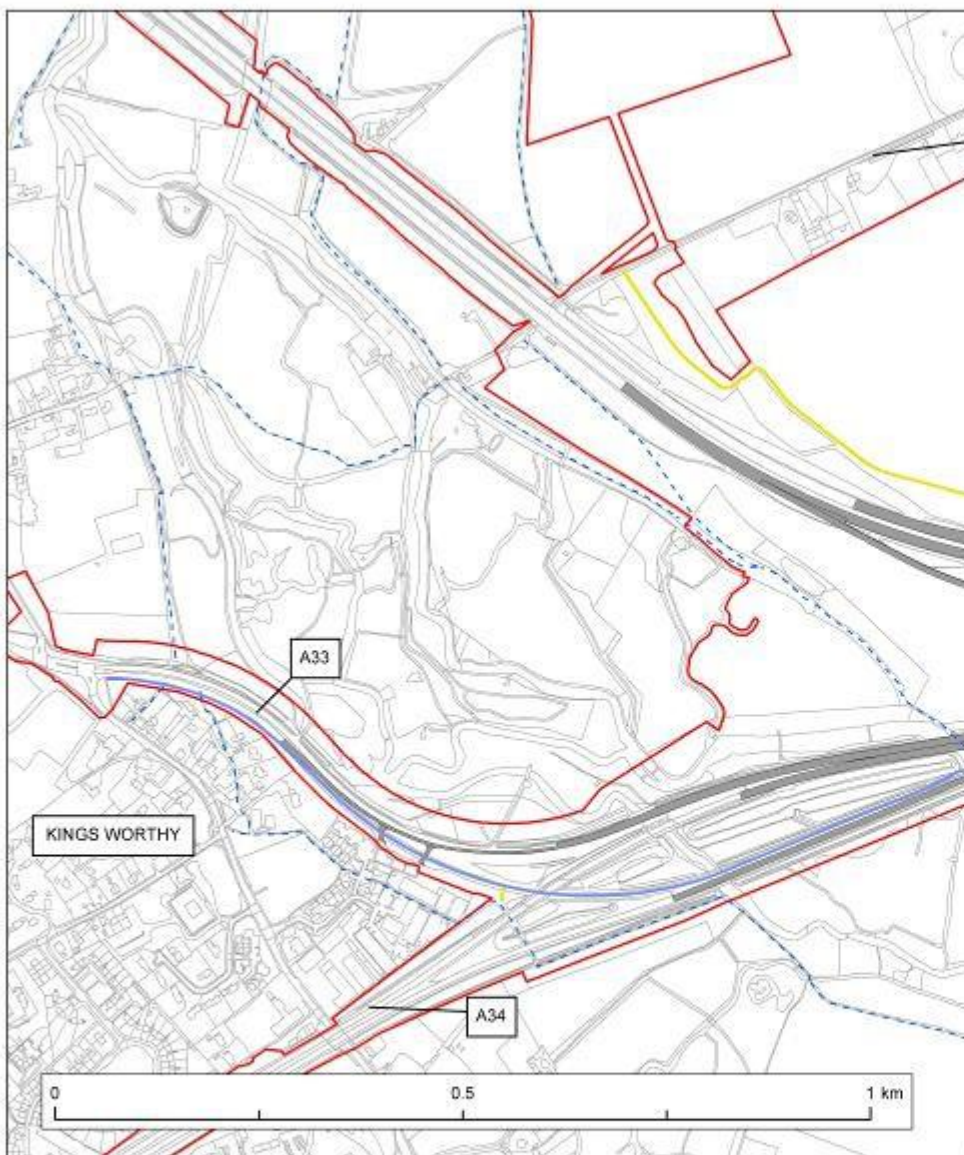
Post: Freepost M3 JUNCTION 9

Please remember that all submissions must be received by 11:59pm on

**Thursday 8 July 2021.**

*Patrick Appleby.*

*The diagram on the next two pages shows the proposed layout - Ed*



#### KEY

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <span style="border: 1px solid red; display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px;"></span> Indicative Application Boundary | <span style="background-color: grey; display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px;"></span> Proposed Carriageway             |
| <span style="border-bottom: 2px solid magenta; width: 20px;"></span> National Cycle Network (NCN 23)                           | <span style="background-color: pink; display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px;"></span> Bridge Extent Above M3 Alignment |
| <span style="border-bottom: 2px dashed blue; width: 20px;"></span> Existing Footpath   | <span style="background-color: lightblue; display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px;"></span> Underpass / Subway          |
| <span style="border-bottom: 2px solid blue; width: 20px;"></span> New Footway Route  |  |
| <span style="border-bottom: 2px solid yellow; width: 20px;"></span> New Footpath Link  |  |
| <span style="border-bottom: 2px solid orange; width: 20px;"></span> New Footway and Cycling Route                              |  |

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Document Path: Z:\Projects\017502\_mod\0175\_GeneralManagement\_WalkingCycling\_Proposed.mxd

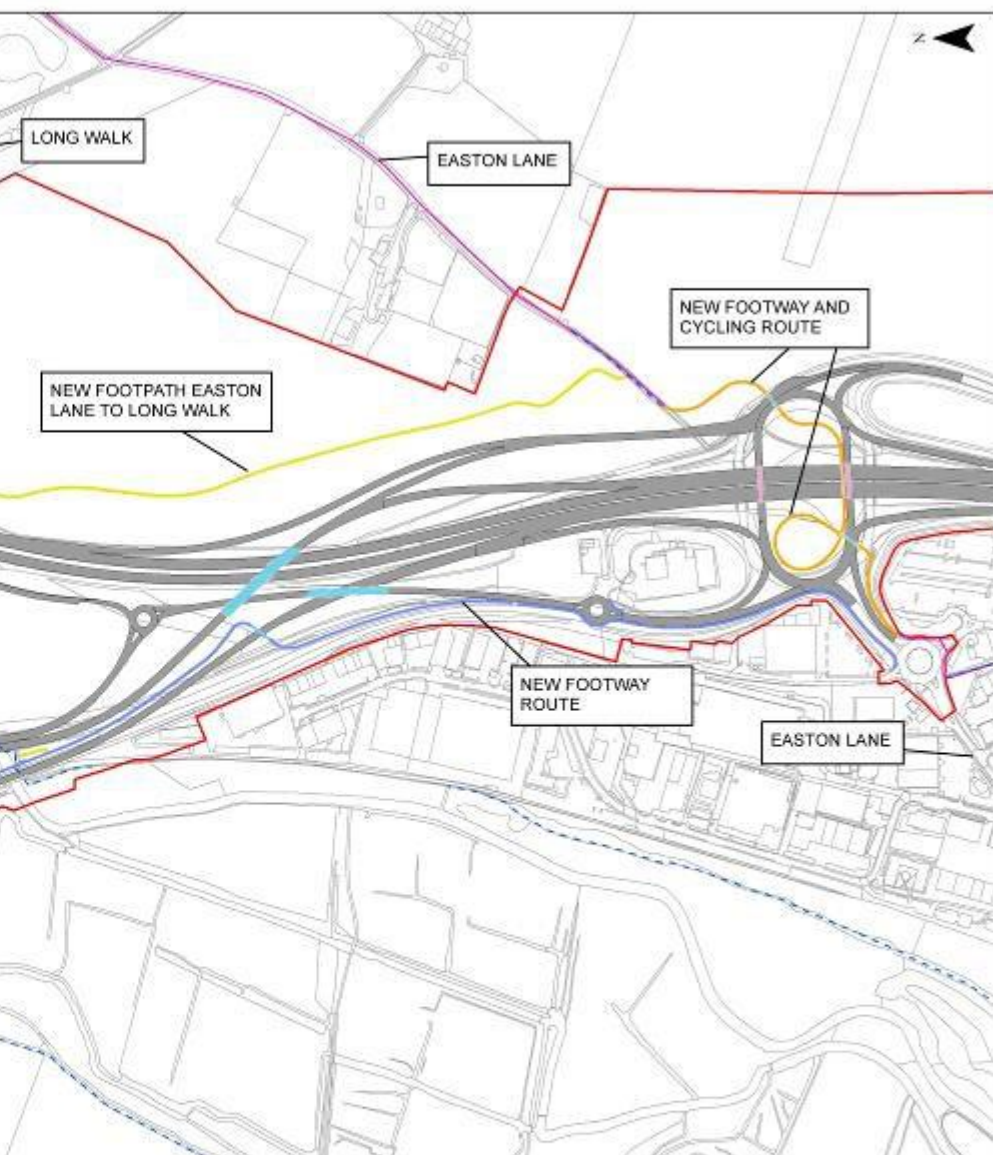




Figure Status	FOR INFORMATION	Project Title					M3 JUNCTION 9 IMPROVEMENT	
		Figure Title					EXISTING AND NEW WALKING AND CYCLING ROUTES	
Client		Scale: 1:5,000		Designed: TL	Drawn: TL	Checked: JM	Approved: JN	
		Original Size: A3	Date: 14/05/2021	Date: 14/05/2021	Date: 14/05/2021	Date: 14/05/2021		
		FIGURE 1						Project Ref: J9/17 Revision: A

## Jackie's County Corner

---

This month Dr Phil Marter, archaeologist and University lecturer, invited me to join him at their 'annual dig'. This year it was at Morn Hill.



Having been one of a team researching the history of this huge camp seven years ago now, it was fascinating seeing it brought to life on the ground by second year University of Winchester students as part of their course work.

Even whilst I was there, one student found a fragment of a comb, clearly stamped made in the USA. Winchester welcomed over 700,000 Americans through the camp in the last year of the war (WWI) and the impact on the life and the economy of the city must have been immense. The memorial to everyone who passed through the camp is outside the Great Hall.

As I write, we don't know what the trajectory of the Delta variant will be or even what the future holds, but the lockdown has meant that consultations are continuing online for now. The M3Junction9 consultation continues until **11.59pm on 8 July**. You can also ask for a telephone consultation if you can't go online - call 0300 123 5000.

Have you been clearing out your wardrobe recently? Now there's another way to put them to good use. Shelter has a scheme whereby you can send them your clothes by post - for free! Go to <https://shop.shelter.org.uk>. You can buy clothes there too.

Two pilot areas have been chosen to trial leaving the grass longer for biodiversity. One is Alresford. In other areas, you are asking for your verges to be left too. It's a fine line between

biodiverse and untidy! I'd appreciate your views as the summer progresses. The County Council had its first live meeting – at the hotel within the Ageas bowl, and after a stuttering start because of Covid 19 regulations, the first Cabinet will be on 13 July. The County's Forward plan lists an additional £1million to top up the Government scheme for installation of better broadband in the county. With several schemes 'on the go' in this division, I will be supporting that decision.

After staying on to steer the County Council during the pandemic, John Coughlan is retiring and Carolyn Williamson, will be the new Chief Executive. Carolyn has been the Deputy Chief Executive and as Director of Corporate Resources has a firm grip on the finances of the County Council (budget £2.1bn) which is exactly what is needed right now. Finally, conscious that much of the traffic on the roads at peak times is school traffic, I am researching school transport plans in our area. If your child is starting school, pre school or nursery, I'd be pleased to hear how you will balance your work and school transport needs.

*Jackie Porter*

*County Councillor Jackie Porter, more news on my website: [website www.jackieporter.co.uk](http://www.jackieporter.co.uk)  
01962 791054,  
[jackie.porter@hants.gov.uk](mailto:jackie.porter@hants.gov.uk)twitter:  
[@JackieLibDem](https://twitter.com/JackieLibDem)*

---

## Help needed

Winchester Prison's small garden area is tended daily by a team of prisoners. The men inside are keen to extend this space and are also hoping to gift local good causes with planted up pots and



hanging baskets. If you have spare plants, pots, hanging baskets or garden tools that you would be happy to donate, please contact Simon Mills at the prison at [Simon.Mills1@justice.gov.uk](mailto:Simon.Mills1@justice.gov.uk)  
*Liz Kavanagh*

## Tiddler Joke

---

Q. What do you call a fairy that doesn't like to have a shower?  
A: A stinkabelle!



Harriet 5yrs & Phoebe 3 yrs

## The Practical Gardener

---

Now that full summer is here, those of us who like plants and shrubs can enjoy the wonderful colours. I have been fascinated by clematis this year and again, I have issues with the experts. I have about 20 different clematis in my garden and some looked pretty dead in the winter. Out came the secateurs and now I have an amazing display of colour. They grow very quickly and the main attention needed is to ensure support such as trellis or frames. Some clematis are very vigorous and others a bit weedy but there is an enormous choice depending on position and flowering time.

I expect to be harvesting peas and broad beans very soon. I try and sow at intervals but it often doesn't work and they all come at once. As soon as the first pea crop is over, I get another pre-sown in trays, ready to go out. Peas must be protected against pigeons, in fact a net across the whole garden to keep them out would be good. They seem to attack anything in the vegetable plot.



There are times when plants just don't thrive and I wish I knew why but my instinct is always to persevere. Don't be disheartened by the odd failure, which I seem to have with almost every crop. I can happily report the potatoes somewhat hit by late frost are doing really well but just about 3 weeks later than usual. Watering of vegetables is a tricky issue and I see that young root crops, leeks and dwarf beans all need some help as do onions. We have to learn to live with very wet to very dry. By contrast, everything in the greenhouse is doing well. The

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tomatoes already have some fruit and I will have the first cucumbers before June is out. To help combat pests, I am spraying with water mixed with a little washing-up liquid, which lowers the surface tension. I also have pots of marigolds and tagetes whose scent is supposed to be off-putting (bit of an old-wives tale but the colour is nice). I pick outside shoots on the tomatoes almost daily and ensure they are well secured to canes. I use a very dilute seaweed feed daily. It's vital to ensure good ventilation so most days the doors are opened. I also have a temperature controlled electric fan.



In my perennial beds, I have the best crop of ground elder and bindweed in the Valley. I weed regularly but have no long-term solution to remove these unwanted invaders. I'm told the only solution is to remove every plant and cover the ground with black polythene. What a stupid idea! So sometimes in gardens we have to live with what is not ideal.

I reckon by July it is safe to cut back all bulb foliage. Otherwise it just hangs over other plants and certainly is not pretty. I think leaving bulbs in their spot is fine but unless the bulbs are planted very deeply, there can be a risk of damage if something else like annuals are used on the same ground. Now is



the time to enjoy your garden but also perhaps an opportunity to do some educating. Get young people involved and explain simple techniques. Good gardens are an essential part of our planet and if we care about that, we must all do our bit.

One final comment concerns my pelargoniums which have been absolutely stunning this year. I wish I knew why.

Happy Gardening!

*Tony Gaster.*


## Our wild valley : Road runners.

---

Enjoying the spring and summer that almost happened in the same week, along with others in the valley we enjoyed seeing the wildlife along the railway track. A surprised shout ahead of us led us to a tail of survival of the fittest. A walker had mistakenly stepped on a slow worm and the animal had split its tail off from its body, a drastic self defence mechanism I imagine designed to free itself from bird claws. Morbid fascination did not only ring true (x 100), all the children touched the tail which wriggled and jiggled for at least 5 minutes while the adult slow worm itself made its escape and slunk off into the scrub - the mechanism truly worked. I had reports of many sightings of slow worms along

**Ewa's Alterations**

---



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

**16-19 June 2022** Easton Flower Festival





here, warming up on the path so do look out for them and admire. The babies in particular appear like thick threads of gold. The female slow worm has a black line down her back.

While encouraging my forest school group (oh yes this has now begun at Itchen Abbas Primary School for the summer) to chat about what they might have seen over half term, I had a beautiful Attenborough moment to start the stories off. A slinky stoat had run across the road in front of the car (just before Martyr Worthy heading west) carrying a baby rabbit - I had a few seconds to take in what I was seeing - a slender tan brown smooth body carrying a rabbit that was at least half its own size. When I looked it up the books say a stoat can carry 5 times its own body weight. To confirm, if you see a much smaller (10cm compared to more like 20cm) dark brown wiggly mammal this is more likely to be a weasel which has a black tip to its shorter stubby tail. I love spring / summer whatever it brings; drive carefully to enjoy the flowers, trees, insects, birds, mammals and friends in our own special bit of Hampshire.

Sophie Rogers

## The Thursday Murder Club

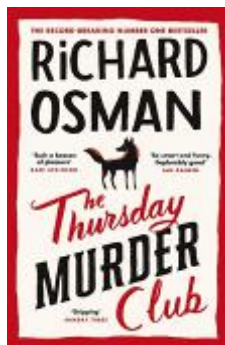
Some books can really annoy me. They are so well written and with such a brilliant plot that I sometimes wish that I could write like that. It annoys me that I never had that idea for a story of my own nor the ability to put it on paper. My current number one annoying book is *The Thursday Murder Club* by Richard Osman.

Not many authors have a runaway success with their debut novel but Richard Osman has achieved that distinction. And really it's no surprise that the book has been such a success. Well written, and about people of my own age group with whom I can empathise, it really is one of those novels that you never want to put down.

Set in a somewhat upmarket retirement home, a group of its residents set about trying to solve the real life murder mystery of the home's owner. With their wide-ranging and sometimes rather surprising individual talents and resources, the amateur sleuths at times appear to be well ahead of the local constabulary. They even rope the police into giving them assistance with their enquiries.

Mr. Osman writes in the easy-to-read style of Jeffrey Archer but with the inquisitive prodding of Jane Marple.

Indeed, one might be forgiven for thinking the book had been written by Agatha Christie herself, did not the occasional references to mobile phones and computers give the game away.





I so enjoyed the story that on purpose I limited myself to only a few chapters a day in order to make the book last longer. However, towards the end of the novel, one had the feeling that all the various red herrings that popped up in the closing chapters were there merely to increase the page count as they didn't necessarily make the plot any easier to follow.

Definitely one for reading when you've no other pressing engagements in your diary.

*Vernon Tottle*

## Good News for the Itchen Valley

We are really pleased to let you know that our next Priest in Charge and Rector Designate is to be Peter



Walker. He comes to us following a distinguished career as a tutor, the author of many books and with his great knowledge of Jerusalem, one who has led many tours to the Holy Land.

He is also an able musician and singer. He and his wife Georgie will move into the Rectory at the beginning of August, he will commence work in the parish a month later and Peter will be Licensed in early September.

Those of us who have met them, have found Peter and Georgie both impressive and very charming. We are confident that Peter will be a great pastoral leader, be a wonderful teacher and contribute greatly to our worship. Further, both Peter and Georgie will

bring a great deal to the wider community in the Valley. Peter will be a worthy successor to Alex. This appointment is most exciting news!

*Beccy Clark, Parish Administrator  
Itchen Valley Parish*

## From the Rectory

---

Yeshuah awoke, startled and not a little surprised; it was after all quite difficult to fall asleep on the back of a donkey. Easier of course when you feel safe and secure and confident in those who are leading you, as Yeshuah was in those who had led him on the journey from Nazareth to Jerusalem. And the surprise soon wore off when he realised they were nearly there and he knew his parents would have ensured that there would be food and shelter waiting for him at journey's end.

The journey from Nazareth had been, as always, long and arduous. Rough and hilly and trying to avoid contact with possibly dangerous animals and even more dangerous humans, more likely to rob you than help you. Better just being on your own. Yeshuah was looking forward to the pleasure and companionship of the Passover meal when he would come together with his wider family, many of whom he had not seen for a year.

Yeshuah was reflecting on this the next day in the temple when he was sitting listening to the priests discussing the tale of a manager who was accused of squandering the assets of his masters. Whether he had acted through incompetence or laziness or deliberate deceit they could not decide. Eventually they concluded it did not matter as the matter of concern was the managers' reaction when found out. When his masters realised how badly he had performed they called him to account,

# Itchen Valley Churches

**4th July** - 10am Family Worship  
Location to be confirmed

**11th July** - 10am Parish Communion  
live at St Mary's, Easton and on Zoom

**11th July** - 6pm Patronal Evensong  
live at St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy

**18th July** - 10am Valley Worship  
Location to be confirmed

**25th July** - 10am Parish Communion  
live at St Mary's, Easton and on Zoom

**Some service locations are yet to be confirmed, please do check the services page on our website for updated information before services. If you would like to attend any of our services you must book online at [admin@itchenvalleychurches.org](mailto:admin@itchenvalleychurches.org)**

## **Private Prayer**

Church opening times will be open between 10am and 2pm as follows:

St Mary's, Easton - Wednesdays  
St John's, Itchen Abbas - every day  
St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy - every day  
St Mary's, Avington - Every day by arrangement  
*please contact Dan at Ivy Cottage or on 07500 860949*

**We may not all be able to gather as we normally do, but we're still here if you need prayerful or practical support.**

**Rector** - Currently Vacant

**LLM** - Mr Gerry Stacey  
[gerry.Stacey@biblesociety.org.uk](mailto:gerry.Stacey@biblesociety.org.uk)  
07554 438973

**Parish Administrator** - Beccy Clark  
[admin@itchenvalleychurches.org](mailto:admin@itchenvalleychurches.org)  
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asked him for justification and a full and open accounting of the situation.

Yeshuah was fascinated, the priests and the Pharisees sat around debating as though they were in the inn rather than the temple, and the crowds sat around the walls eating up their every word. Some took a legal view and interpreted it in the light of the Mosaic rules whilst others more pragmatically felt that in business whatever worked was justified. Yeshuah was concerned though that few of them seemed to be considering God's wishes.

As the story unfolded it turned out that the manager had said to himself "What shall I do, since my masters are taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I have decided what to do, so that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses." And he went round all the people he had worked with and offered them favours, wrote off some of their debts and dreamed up other incentives so that they were beholden to him and would remember him when he was put out of his job.

As the priests argued back and forth Yeshuah thought carefully to himself that the man's sin lay in his lack of faith. He was doing his best to provide for the only future he believed in, his personal future on earth. Yeshuah realised that money of itself is neither good nor evil and any can be pressed into the service of God and our neighbour. How much better then if the prudence of the sinful manager had been used to provide in an eternal future if he had only had the faith to see it.

You can read more about this story in Luke 2:41-52 and 16:1-13

Gerry Stacey, *Licensed Lay Minister*

## In the Steps of Jesus by Revd Peter Walker

---

I wish that I had read Peter Walker's remarkable book when we went to Galilee and Jerusalem 5 years ago. Peter has considerable talents as a professor of biblical studies, a historian, a classicist and travel guide. What attracted me most to this book is that from the early pages I found his lightness of touch made all his learning so much more approachable. *In the steps of Jesus* is based upon the Gospel of Luke but explores a wide range of Christian and other writings as well as the Bible itself. Luke was chosen as a Gentile who was a doctor, apparently interested in history, and because of his visits to Jerusalem after his travels with Paul.

As Peter reminds us, the story of Jesus is about people not places. However it is impossible fully to appreciate the Gospel writings without putting them in the context of the time, how the places have changed, and without understanding the religious and emotional turmoil engulfing the people of Palestine under Roman rule then and for many centuries before Jesus and right up to today. This multiplicity of subjects has been addressed by putting timelines and biographical and other notes into boxes within each chapter. While this does interfere with the flow of the main story, it has the considerable advantage of completely avoiding the need for appendices.

I find Peter's storytelling particularly attractive in his willingness to explore events and activities not necessarily covered in the gospels, but without in any way departing from his firmly held faith. Early on he looks at Jesus' childhood in the tiny village of



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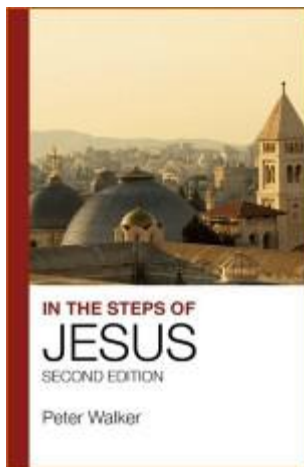


Nazareth and speculates on the impact of nearby Sepphoris, a much larger town which was then being completely re-built by Herod Antipas following an earlier rebellion and its total destruction. Here there was work for craftsmen and a broad mix of Jewish and other nationals. In contrast Nazareth was a particularly strong Judaeian community who drove Jesus out of the synagogue after his

identification as the Messiah from his reading of Isaiah.

The gospels were all written to tell the good news of Jesus, rather than to explain the context of the time, traditions and politics. Peter is able to use his historical and biblical scholarship to set a scene that is not always familiar to us. By doing this he makes the truth of these accounts much more evident than is necessarily the case from reading the Bible alone. He also presents us with word pictures of the variety of places and landscapes in which our story is set, telling us for instance that the Jordan is not a large and forbidding river, but equivalent to a very dirty Itchen with enormous historical and religious associations.

We travel with him through the barren desert but his story comes alive again as we visit the once tiny village of Bethany and the Mount of Olives. Here we find his help to accept these lonely places of retreat as they were in Jesus' day. We then enter Jerusalem to build to the climax of our story. Peter describes a city hideously changed and corrupted by endless conquest and destruction, all of which tend to be



overlooked in traditional accounts of the Passion Story. This is where the importance of people and atmosphere, not places, becomes most relevant. Jerusalem has been destroyed and rebuilt so many times that tracing exact locations is almost meaningless. Peter takes us through these gospel events instead with considerable understanding of the relevance of these to our faith and then adds

touches like the possible connection between Simon of Cyrene and Mark the Evangelist and Paul. Finally we go with the risen Jesus to Emmaus and come to understand how our doubts and fears can be overcome like those of Jesus' followers as his resurrection and purposes become understood by them.

I put down his book realizing that we have a lot to learn of the life and message of Christ. We also have in our new rector a teacher who will lead us in this education. He brings a completely new set of skills to build on the progress that Alex has made for us in widening our congregation and securing the future of the parish.

*Nick Owen*

## The only Buddhist in the Valley?!

Although I have lived in Itchen Abbas for a decade, I have shamefully never written in to the Itchen Valley News, despite reading it avidly each month. We moved a few miles down the road to Fobdown, Alresford in December 2020 but I still feel very much part of

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the Itchen Valley. There are things about my life that make me perhaps a little unusual, and that may well be why I have been reticent to write. My family and I are probably what you might call 'alternative' - we are long-term vegans, we don't drink alcohol, we home educated our son (out of choice!) for a year, and I have been a practising Buddhist for around seven years. However, when I recently posted on the Itchen List about having some robes altered for my ordination this May, I was really delighted to receive lots of kind, openminded and inquisitive responses. People have asked to know more about my ordination, so here I am with some information that hopefully answers some of your questions!

I started practising with Southampton Buddhist Centre – currently located on St Mary's Street in a old pub now transformed – in 2014. At that point in my life I had felt like I was on some sort of treadmill, with no real sense of purpose or deeper connection to life. I was in a parent-work-parent-drink wine-sleep cycle every day, with nothing much giving me joy.

I decided to give meditation a try and went to a women's retreat centre called Taraloka in Shropshire for a weekend beginner's retreat, then started going to a weekly class at Southampton following that. Buddhism focuses on creating positive mental states – joy, compassion, generosity, loving kindness – even in the face of difficulty or challenges. It helps us understand that human beings are naturally 'good' and that we can use this in-built nature to evolve and transform ourselves in ways that help us make beneficial choices for ourselves and others. As I learned more about my mind, about

meditation, about ethical ways to live in the world that created positive effects for myself and for others around me, I began to change quite dramatically. I realised that this way of living has given me great joy and freedom, and I wanted to take a step to make this more of a lifetime commitment.

In 2015 I asked to be ordained into the Triratna Buddhist Order, which is a process of many years training. The Order is neither monastic nor lay – we follow the maxim 'commitment is primary, lifestyle is secondary'. So some Order members live semi-monastically in retreat centres and some have families and regular jobs. The commitment we make is to put the Buddha's teachings at the centre of our lives, and to practice to gain 'enlightenment' or 'awakening'. This means to try and see things as they really are – to see human beings as capable of great compassion and love, to see life as an ever-changing process where nothing is fixed or permanent, and to see the difficulties we cause ourselves by trying to keep hold of what can never be held onto. It's difficult to explain in a few sentences, but that is my best try!

After almost six years of training for ordination, I was invited to be ordained at a women's retreat centre this May. Due to Covid, much of the retreat was online and I accessed the retreat from a 'solitary suite' at the retreat centre with my fellow ordinands being all round the country. We were only able to come to the same place for a couple of hours as we had our formal ordination ceremony.

As part of our ordination we take ten 'precepts' or 'training principles', which are given to us by our Private Preceptor – an experienced spiritual friend who knows us very well.

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- truthful communication
- kindly communication
- helpful communication
- harmonious communication
- abandoning covetousness for tranquillity
- changing hatred into compassion
- transforming ignorance into wisdom

These precepts become what guide our lives, and at ordination we take them as lifelong vows, in a ceremony just with our Private Preceptor who witnesses our commitment.

Then we publicly affirm those in a public ceremony (which was just the people at our retreat centre, during Covid times! No public allowed alas) with a Public Preceptor who represents the Order welcoming all the ordinands. Whilst we wore blue robes on our ordination retreat we don't wear them the rest of the time. When teaching or practising at the Buddhist centre, Order members wear a 'kesa' – which is white and worn around the neck – as 'essentialised robes', to remind us of our commitment. I received this kesa when I was ordained.



Me in the centre with (left) my Public Preceptor and (right) Private Preceptor  
My previous name was Sarah Boak, but

I was given a new name at ordination – Utpaladhi. This means 'she who has the mind or intelligence of the blue lotus'.

We are given names that both reflect our most beautiful qualities but also give us something to aspire to as we practice. The blue lotus is a mysterious flower – it is a night lotus, which opens at sunset and blooms with the moon. It symbolises wisdom and intuition, and the gradual opening into our full potential as human beings... it rises up from the mud but comes into bloom in an effortless way. It is a symbol of surrender. I have also been told it represents vast consciousness! There are many levels and layers of my name to explore as I journey onwards into this new life.



Our shrine room after celebratory rose petals were thrown over the new Order Members!

I would be more than happy to answer any questions, and if anyone would like to learn more about meditation or Buddhism, then feel free to get in touch! My email is [utpaladhi108@gmail.com](mailto:utpaladhi108@gmail.com) and the website for Southampton Buddhist Centre is [www.southamptonbuddhistcentre.org](http://www.southamptonbuddhistcentre.org)  
*Utpaladhi Dharmacarini*

## Soggy bottom news

As a general rule, I don't follow the antics of Gordon Ramsay but as I was given a book of his for Christmas, I



thought I should try out a recipe or two. Whilst I wouldn't recommend his Orange and Passion Fruit tart (too longwinded to make), I did learn a wonderful way of stopping pastry from going soggy.

Having baked the empty pastry case, Gordon instructed me to coat the inside of the tart with melted plain chocolate. Yet another step in the very tortuous recipe but, as it turned out,



most effective.

The tart, once filled and fully baked, had the crispiest pastry I remember baking for a long time. None of the filling had leaked into the base and the pie was pronounced a great success.

*Sue Sheph*

*Perhaps next month we will learn the equivalent trick for a savoury tart - Ed*

## Somewhere to sit Dunn

A new bench has been placed by the bus stop at the entrance to Shelley Close, Itchen Abbas, in memory of Jean and Gerald Dunn. They lived in Shelley Close for half a century.



## Local monthly information

### Itchen Valley area waste collections in July

Black bins and brown garden bins on Friday 2, 16 and 30 July. Green bins on Fridays 9 and 23 July. Glass boxes on Friday 23 July.

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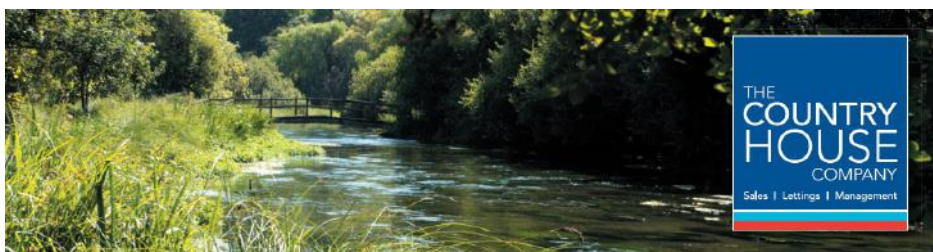
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