

ITCHEN Valley News

Issue 92 August 2021

For Avington, Easton, Itchen Abbas and Martyr Worthy



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WELCOME to the Valley News



It was a very jolly party when we said goodbye and thank you to Fi Macintosh and Lucy Wolfe, who have worked together to edit the Itchen Valley News since it was launched in its present form in 2014. They have brought a wicked sense of humour (Fi should be writing headlines for the tabloids) and a life affirming view of Valley life to the team. It leaves the editorial team in need of reinforcement.



I expect most of us value our local community, even feel proud of all the local networks and events that are run by volunteers. The WhatsApp groups encouraged by the pandemic are great but in some ways exclusive rather than inclusive and we hope and think that the Itchen Valley News has something in it for everybody. We hope you agree that it is worth keeping going.

Lucy and Fi are irreplaceable, but a mixture of personalities and profiles makes for a much more wide ranging magazine, and we really need to add some newcomers. With four editor teams it means taking charge of the magazine three times a year. It takes me an hour or two a day over about a week to nudge contributions and get organised, and a concentrated day or two putting it all together. My computer skills have been honed in the

process, and I don't have to take advantage of Vernon's help very often anymore – though it's a great comfort to know he has our back. In short, you need a reasonable feel for written English, an interest in our local community, a bit of time and enough confidence to learn new computer skills. It might even be work experience for someone thinking of a career in journalism.

Do we need a printed local magazine? Do you read it? Do you have views about what it should include and what you don't enjoy reading? Write to itchenvalleynews@gmail.com and let us know. You could be the person who influences its direction!

Next month's editor is Tony Gaster.
Verity Coleman

Itchen Valley News

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Please send all contributions for September 2021 by Sunday 15 August. All material is published in good faith and the Valley News cannot be held responsible for any information given or views expressed; neither can it be liable for any loss arising from the use of any information or advertisements contained herein. The Editorial Team reserves the right to refuse or amend articles or advertisements submitted for publication. Printed by Greenhouse Graphics of Basingstoke.
Cover photo Verity Coleman and other photos from various contributors.

What's On

Little Rainbows toddler group (see front cover)

Over the summer holidays, Little Rainbows is going to take a break from its usual format of meeting at St John's, Itchen Abbas on Monday mornings. Instead we will meet informally in one of the local playgrounds, between 9.30-11am. There will be lots of space for older siblings to let off some energy, for the toddlers to toddle, and for parents and carers to enjoy time with each other. Details of the venue and any last minute wet-weather plans will be communicated on the Little Rainbows WhatsApp group. If you'd like to join this, please contact me on 07916 162214.

Julia Wright

Police visit 21 August

The Community police will be visiting Easton and the Itchen Valley. See the report from WCC Councillor Fiona Isaacs on page 25.

Hampshire Open Studios 21-30 August

An annual art trail where the visiting public can meet artists in their homes, studios and galleries, free of charge. With over 250 venues open, visitors have the opportunity to meet the makers direct and learn more about their work. There is a wide variety of venues to see, along with every type of art and craft on offer in the region, including painting, sculpture, ceramics, glass, furniture, jewellery and many more. If you are not sure where to start, some mini-trails have been suggested for each area around the county. Visitors can also enter a prize draw to win £100 towards artwork from your favourite Hampshire Open Studios artist.



There are 30 venues in this area. Winchester City centre has a cluster of studios in close proximity including new venue, The Colour Factory, which is a short ten-minute walk from the high street or the railway station. Its gallery and shop will be selling jewellery, wearable objects, paintings, prints, greeting cards, lamps, shades and craft kits. All work is original and hand made by the studio artists including Rachel Alexander, Jessica Marie, Jenny Muncaster, Rosie Parmley, Mia Preston, Emily Smith and Carol Wade.

Artist Karen Eames, based in Chalkhill Studio, Olivers Battery, exhibits emotive and expressive paintings. Karen is a contemporary artist who draws on observations and her memories, building layers of oil, cold wax and mixed media to provide a sense of place, she excavates layers of paint in her local landscapes and seascapes.

In Alresford, Julie and Ted Hepenstal open their garden studio with a variety of paintings using acrylics, oils and gouache. Also nearby is Penny Metcalfe's venue showing artwork inspired by landscapes and the natural world, reflecting a passion for colour and evoking a sense of place and emotion. She is also displaying ceramic

sculptures based on organic form and quirky idiosyncratic figures. In Bishops Sutton, artist Michael Dudfield exhibits large centre-piece ocean wave paintings - everything from crashing ocean waves and surf spray to tranquil ocean ripple paintings.

Artists are very much looking forward to inviting you once again to their studios and galleries. They will be making every effort for your visit to be enjoyable, creative and safe. Visiting guidance will be on the website so please do check that, to help you make the most of your days out.

Entry is free; to find your nearest venue, check the website or look out for the pink direction arrows that will guide you to the artists' doors.

www.hampshireopenstudios.org.uk

Lesley Self



Winchester Go LD Annual Bridge Tea

Wednesday 29 September

2.00 – 5.00

at the Manor House, Preshaw, Southampton SO24 0PF

Come and join us for a friendly competition and a gorgeous homemade tea. To book a table (£80 per table), or to make a donation, please contact: Jo Tyler johanna.tyler@btinternet.com 01962 736490/07747607539

Winchester Heritage Open Days Friday 10-Sunday 19 September

Winchester Heritage Open Days are now under the umbrella of the new and exciting Hampshire History Trust, which aims to celebrate the rich and



diverse history and heritage of the county of Hampshire. It will be expanding Heritage Open Days into a wider festival, running community projects such as a Blue Plaque project and further developing the brilliant HistBites podcasts. For more information, visit the Trust's website <https://hampshirehistorytrust.com>

This is the sixth year of the open days and they will again be a mix of digital and in-person events, building on the success of these in 2020. The programme is designed to draw people's interest into Winchester and its surrounds through an amazing choice of talks, tours, exhibitions and family fun – all for free! Digital events will include pre-recorded walks and talks, live streaming of lectures and performances, and specially commissioned films and audio available on Winchester Heritage Open Days' YouTube and podcast channels. There are also great in-person events for everyone to enjoy. This year's festival theme is 'Edible England' so do keep a look out for events celebrating our culinary heritage and culture.

For more information and how to book, please visit our website www.winchesterheritageopendays.org
Nicky Gottlieb, Festival Director

COVID cancellations

Boom Village 12-15 August

We are truly sorry to have to say this again, but we have had to make the incredibly hard decision to cancel

Boom Village. The core decision is due to the escalating cases of COVID-19 across the country, and the risks that widespread illness and self-isolation could have on our crew and contractors, which would result in us not having enough people to build and deliver the show to the high public safety standards we uphold.

We appreciate that this decision may be confusing in light of the latest Government announcement relaxing most of the COVID legislation from Monday 19 July. In that announcement, it was also stated that the responsibility and 'common sense' now lies with the individual or organisation; that is a responsibility we take very seriously. The circumstances we've outlined above severely affect our ability to deliver a show where we could guarantee high levels of safety for all in attendance, as there are so many factors outside our control. All ticket holders have received an email detailing all automatic refund information. We will refocus back onto Boomtown 2022 and work towards what will be the most epic celebration next August.

CAMEO 17 August

CAMEO is an Itchen Valley lunch group for our older residents, usually held in St John's Church, Itchen Abbas. We had hoped to re-start our sociable lunches in August but with the predictions of a continuing rise in infections, we have regretfully decided that would be too big a risk. We have been keeping in touch with our regular guests over the telephone and with small deliveries which will continue to mark the third Tuesday of the month until we can re-convene, hopefully in September.

Charlotte Appleby 779778

Boules competitions

Triples Tournament

The Triples is the knock-out boules event between the four villages. It was held on Tuesday 22 June at Oak House in Easton, by kind permission of Judy Bishop. The lockdown rules severely restricted the numbers attending but it was a lovely evening, with refreshments generously contributed by all, and the eight teams threw their energies into the challenge. There had been no corresponding event last year because of coronavirus. The Nigel Graham Maw Trophy had a two-year rest at Itchen Abbas, but it was proudly on display waiting to find out who would be its 2021 claimant.

The teams are arranged in two groups, and each village plays against each other village team in its group, with the winners and runners-up in each group going forward to the semi-finals. After three rounds, both the two Avington teams and one team from Easton and one from Martyr Worthy qualified for the knock-out section.

In the two semi-finals, one of the Avington teams fell to the Martyr Worthy players' greater accuracy, while the second Avington team managed to overcome its Easton opponents. The final therefore saw Avington pitched against Martyr Worthy. The atmosphere was tense as the score slowly crept up and eventually it was the Avington team who emerged as winners.

Bob Banham for Itchen Abbas, being the previous holders, thanked Judy Bishop and the Easton organisers for hosting the event and he presented the trophy to the successful Avington team of Mike Lane, Jean Wright and Christopher Langford.



League competition

The second round of the league took place on Tuesday 13 July. Avington and Easton each started with a 2-point advantage over their rivals, but things changed that day.

Itchen Abbas were playing Avington at the village hall and started in fine form, winning both the first two games. After the break, the play was much more balanced and the score for both teams edged closer and closer to the 13 points required. In the end each village won one further game by 13-11. Score for the evening - Itchen Abbas 3 games, Avington 1.

At the other location, Easton were at home to Martyr Worthy and were in excellent form. All games were hotly contested but, try as they might, the Martyr Worthy teams could not prevent a clean sweep by Easton, who won by 4-0.

So at the end of round 2, the overall score is Easton 7, Avington and Itchen Abbas equal on 4 games each and Martyr Worthy on 1. There is one more round to go. Easton have a big lead – are they unassailable?

Ralph Matthews

Newhouse Farm Open Day

Newhouse Farm in Northington held its annual open day on the last Sunday of June, and, despite the dismal

weather, what a joy it was to be able to walk around and have a real peek at what goes on behind the scenes, particularly as it is somewhere that I have driven past many times.

It was very well organised, with two different routes to explore, depending how far you wanted to walk. We chose the shorter one, which was suggested to take 30 minutes, but that didn't take into account our curious minds as we stopped and chatted at the various stations, equipped with information boards and somebody on hand to answer questions, which had been set up along the way.

First stop was meeting the cheeky pigs, sheep and goats. We didn't get to see the latest litter of these beautiful Gloucester Old Spot piglets as they were taking their afternoon snooze, but we watched the teenagers having fun instead, and they even lined up in a row for a photo!



Next, a brisk march up a steep hill in the drizzle rewarded us with the sight of 1800 splendid plum trees spread over the twelve acre orchard belonging to The Wessex Wild Plum Company, where they grow twelve different varieties of plums – damsons and golden and red bullace to name a few. Unfortunately, there was none of their gorgeous plum liqueur to taste, but we were assured there would be plenty on offer when we come back for the



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Christmas market.

Back down the hill, where we were met by Andy Bason, the farm manager, we chatted about how he farms sustainably and his soil management. We were thrilled to learn about his latest venture selling his wheat to the Winchester City Mill – it's always great to add something else to our list for buying local. Andy also told me that they have plans to start growing spelt soon, which I am particularly excited about, as I love to bake with that when I can – as they say in South Africa, local is definitely lekker.



On our way back, we admired the enormous pumpkin patch newly planted by Matt and Sam, and heard about the plans to involve school children in the autumn half term to come and pick them for Halloween. We did, however, get to sample some of the produce, as we couldn't resist



stopping for some burgers and sausages on our way out, and delicious they were too. Thank you, Newhouse Farm, for a lovely morning roaming your farm, and really enjoyable and informative. Looking forward to the Christmas Market!

If you would like to find out more about Newhouse Farm, then you can visit its website at www.newhousefarmpartnership.co.uk and sign up to the newsletter and mailing list.

Polly Howard

The Grange Festival 2021

In what has been a most difficult year to make firm plans, our own Grange Festival has succeeded in staging three new opera productions, with Shakespeare's play **King Lear** due to open after the deadline for this review. Social distancing constraints have made the Director's job close to impossible at times - how do lovers embrace while staying at least 2 metres apart? And the ever-present threat of Covid infection has meant strict rules for performers' bubbles, half-full auditoriums to begin with, and lots of paperwork for the audience. Fortunately, the four week delay to the promised end of lockdown failed to create havoc with the economics of the Festival; Michael Chance's team succeeded in winning the right to a trial event (not just pop festivals and football, after all!). So full audiences from 1 July, not even obliged to wear a mask in the auditorium, became possible. Yet the physical impossibility of arranging the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra into a widely-spaced layout in the pit was surmounted by cleverly pre-recording a full team of instrumentalists, seamlessly

projected with flexible timing to accommodate day-to-day variations of pace.



Generally agreed to be the outstanding production, Rossini's *La Cenerentola* was wittily staged and beautifully sung, making clever use of revolving scenery as the action moved between Cinderella's down-at-heel trailer park and the Prince's luxuriously-appointed palace. So much of the libretto needs to be sung at breakneck pace that one marvelled at the artistry deployed to achieve this with such beautiful tone. The tumultuous applause at the end of the opera gave the audience the chance to express their full-throated appreciation of a wonderful evening's entertainment.



Britten's *Midsummer Night's Dream* is difficult to stage convincingly in the face of such outstanding productions as Glyndebourne's 1980s version, but the



sets here managed to evoke Athens and the forest scenes very effectively. Alexander Chance was most accomplished in his father's most famous role of Oberon, and special mention should be made of Roberto Lorenzi's Theseus and Angharad Lyddon's Hippolyta - she won the Wessex Award in 2015, incidentally. To round off the season, Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* starred Welsh soprano Elin Pritchard alongside Peter Auty as her young lover, with Stephen Richardson darkly menacing as her ageing sugar daddy. Michael Chance was heard to say that the prospect of Elin in the title role was all the incentive he needed to stage the opera this year, and it would be difficult to imagine better casting - Elin was quite outstanding especially in the final act. All in all, The Grange has given its patrons a wonderful 2021 season, full of contrast and new insights into three more than usually familiar operas. Next month, news of *My Fair Lady*



and **King Lear** - two productions bringing the season to a successful end.

Peter McManus

Photo credits Simon Annand

Valley Gardeners: out and about in the Surrey Hills

A group of thirty Valley Gardeners had a splendid day out exploring gardens and sculptures in the leafy Surrey hills on 13 July. Hilary and Mike Goodridge have created a stunning acre of English country garden at its best at Chinthurst Lodge, which they have owned since 1988. The beautiful white garden has a very soothing atmosphere and we enjoyed some outstanding cakes and coffee sitting there soaking up the sun. Other garden “rooms”, displaying many interesting plants, are just out of view and waiting to be discovered, whilst outside the garden boundary gently sloping hills, thickly forested, create a bowl like effect into which the garden nestles. Really charming.



After lunch, we arrived at The Hannah Peschar sculpture garden and when I tell you that we have wanted to visit this garden for about five years but been thwarted in our attempts to do so, you will understand how delighted we were to be there finally.

Magical is a word much overused these days but this lush and subtly tamed natural space - which provides a perfect canvas for items of contemporary art - is most certainly worthy of that adjective. There is a mysterious quality about the entire site which makes it so quiet and interesting and so restful. Only the sound of rushing water when you approach the weir or birdsong pierces the peace. Most surprisingly, although you know that 29 of your fellow Valley Gardeners are in the garden, you cannot see or hear them, such is the thickness of the tree and plant cover. Around each bend in the path, you discover another piece of sculpture and I found that it really didn't matter if I liked the piece of art or not; the visual impact of it on the surroundings was enjoyment enough.

The Sculpture Garden was the brainchild of owner and original curator Hannah Peschar 36 years ago, and has grown from a handful of sculptures to over 200 pieces exhibited every summer. Artists come from



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across Britain and Europe to exhibit their work in these breathtaking surroundings, allowing their sculptures to be seen in a completely new way. If you are interested in the relationship between art and nature, this is a great place to visit. Afternoon is the better time to be in the garden we were advised, as the light is beautiful then and plays onto the sculptures giving yet another dimension to the effect. You need to book tickets in advance which does mean that the garden will never be overcrowded. Paths can be slippery, even in the summer, so it is best to wear “sensible” shoes! Our visit was definitely worth the wait.



Catherine Hahn

The Valley's Carbon Footprint

Many of us hope that the climate crisis will be largely tackled by new technology, such as the expansion of wind and solar energy generation and the introduction of electric vehicles. However, we also know that drastically reducing our carbon emissions will require us all to make significant lifestyle changes. Many have already embraced significant changes whilst others are worried and some resistant. The scale of the challenge for us in the Itchen Valley is powerfully illustrated by data produced recently by the Centre for Sustainable Energy, (CSE).

The CSE has calculated carbon footprints by parish using modelling that draws on information from more than 30 data sets, some of which themselves are made up of multiple data sets. We have been provided with a CSE Carbon Footprint Report for the Itchen Valley and it makes for a sobering read. Total estimated emissions in the Itchen Valley by household are shown below with comparative figures for the wider Winchester area and the UK overall, in

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four broad categories.

Emissions per household tCO₂ e*

	Valley	Winch	UK
Food/drink	4.3	4.1	3.0
Travel	5.8	4.4	2.6
Housing	6.0	4.3	2.9
Goods/serv	7.1	6.7	4.5
Total	23.2	19.5	13.0

*The numbers quoted are carbon dioxide equivalents which is a standard measure in carbon accounting, expressing the impact of a number of different greenhouse gases collectively as a common unit.

Within the Travel category it should be noted that for the Itchen Valley 2.39 tCO₂e (50%) are accounted for by air travel, higher than Winchester at 1.71 and two and a half times greater than the national average at 0.90. Within the Food & Drink number, over half are accounted for by meat and fish consumption. And in the Housing category, almost two thirds are consumed for space heating. So, a cursory view of the data suggests that the three changes that would have the most effective impact in reducing carbon emissions in the Itchen Valley are:

- Eating less meat and dairy
- Minimising frequent flying
- De-carbonising home heating

So, can we do it? Technology and regulation will play their part but we must surely recognise our individual responsibility. As a relatively affluent area, we are responsible for a disproportionate level of emissions and have a big responsibility to show leadership. But let us not forget that climate change adjustments will also carry significant benefits such as cleaner air and improved health. So the question is, what can we do as a community to rise to the challenges ahead of us? Future articles in *The News*

will address the challenges in more detail. In the meantime, you might check one of the websites below to calculate your personal carbon footprint, a learning exercise perhaps for the whole family.

[www.carbonfootprint.com
calculator.aspx](http://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx)

www.carbonindependent.org

www.pawprint.eco/pawprint-app

Cllr Stephen Percy

The Itchen Valley News is not in a position to verify the figures quoted by Cllr Percy.
Ed

From the Parish Council



With many Covid 19 restrictions ending, we have been able to hold a Full Council Meeting in person for the first time in

about eighteen months. Needless to say, there is a degree of catching up to do but, while we were able to hold remote meetings and, once they were no longer permitted, had delegated powers instead, there has been less of a backlog than might have been expected.

A great deal of the work that has been carried out has been done by Michelle, our Clerk. It is therefore sad to report that she is leaving us for a new role with a much larger council. She has worked hard for us for the last two and a half years and our administration under her guidance has improved enormously. If anyone is interested in taking on this role which is paid, part time and mainly working from home, please let me know.

A second resignation is Loulou Stirrup who has been a valuable member of the Parish Council in recent years. She, Dan and family are leaving Avington; we wish them well in their new home and with their online enterprise. Many will remember in last winter's wet weather when there were more than a few well used muddy footpaths. One or two were so bad in places that they were close to impassable. We have managed to get some funding from the County Council to produce an all weather surface in the worst areas.

Work is due to start on 2 August on the first of these to be tackled. This is a section of the path between Church Lane Martyr Worthy and Chilland Lane (footpath 30). The work should take about four days and while it is underway, for the safety of all, this path will be closed while work is in progress. The material needed for surfacing will be delivered and stored at the car park at Couch Green. It will



then be transferred to the path by dumper truck. While delivery and loading takes place, the car park may be closed.

Still on the subject of footpaths, we received an email recently warning us of the poisonous plant hemlock growing near one of the bridges over the river. Thanks to one of our wild life experts that plant has now gone. However, it has highlighted that in the countryside there are plants that are poisonous and while out walking we need to be aware of them. Giant hogweed is one that can be found in the Valley and contact with the leaves on bare skin can lead to chemical burns so please be careful.

Two other pieces of news:

First, BoomTown having been cancelled for a second year, the organisers had aimed at holding Boom Village, as advertised in a previous issue. Due to the uncertainty with Covid 19 and safety, that event has also been cancelled. (see page 5).

Second: plans to complete the sewage transfer system from Avington to Easton have been announced. The intention is to start this work sometime next year. This project started about seven years ago, ran into problems and came to a halt. Hopefully there will not be too much disruption while it is finished.

The Parish Council tries to take a break in August so all being well we will next meet at the beginning of September.

Patrick Appleby
Chairman

Next month's magazine

Please try to submit any articles for the September issue by 15 August as the editing deadline will be tight. Thanks.



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Notes from the Field

James Greig, who has started a cut flower farm in the heart of Easton, is continuing to share his thoughts on the progress of his new project.

Hello, it's been a while since I last wrote an update. So what have you missed? Well, May was cold and nothing grew, June was a little better, and now here we are at the height of summer and everything is catching up and the weather is finally behaving itself.

Spring 2021 was the coldest on record, not the ideal time to begin a flower growing enterprise. Growth was stunted as everything slowed down, and on average everything was a month behind. I'm not sure if you saw the same in your gardens, but it made for a strange early summer as typical May flowers finally showed their faces in mid June.

By July, everything caught up, thanks to a heavy dose of sun and rain. The roses bloomed, sweet peas popped, the ammi frothed and the larkspur towered. Dahlias sprang up, and everything began to race off. What was a paddock six months before finally began to look like a flower farm. It was also a joy to see the arrival of the first butterflies from their slumber - peacocks, red admirals, tortoiseshells - and be kept company by passing



herons, pied wagtails and a fleeting flash of an amber bellied kingfisher. It also changed my perspective of the area. I've only been in the valley a few years, but working the land gave a new outlook to the Itchen Valley. The subtle changes in the cyclical nature of the seasons was amplified: the way the wind blows, the sun and shadows change, the direction of the rain. But it wasn't only flowers growing. Our most prolific crops are definitely two unwanted ones - couch grass and plantain. They popped up everywhere. Cue a mass hire of most of the teenagers in the Valley to come and help weed: a big thank you to everyone who helped. Then came the blackfly and the greenfly, but hot on their heels was an army of ladybugs and toads! This is what we have been working towards, biodiversity working symbiotically together, the harmony of nature working as it should. In mid-June we celebrated British



Flower Week, organised by the Covent Garden Market to celebrate the best in seasonal British flowers. We were honoured to be invited to decorate Open House Deli in Winchester and The Yard café in Chilton Candover. Both displays gave us a fantastic chance to celebrate the huge breadth of what was blooming in late June. The Open House Deli display took inspiration from the hedgerows around the Itchen Valley with towering foxgloves battling for attention with turning alliums, bobbing poppy seed, geums and mallows. The display at The Yard was inspired by the wild flowers surrounding their farm and the riot of colour (pictured). Flowers from our field were combined with wild flowers and grasses growing around their Chilton Manor Farm.

But the highlight so far has been the incredible warmth and kindness received from all of the Valley residents who have supported us so far by buying our locally grown flowers. We now have a weekly delivery round for all those who have subscribed to regular flowers, we supply to Open House Deli in Winchester, are supplying various local florists and have contributed flowers for several local weddings. Some Easton bouquets have even been delivered on foot - a near zero carbon footprint.

It is still early days, and there is a lot more to learn, but as we enter a new chapter of being more environmentally aware, I feel we're trying something exciting as we look to grow a local, ethical and sustainable product. If you're passing the field, please say hi, and if you would like to order flowers, either as a bouquet or as a bucket to arrange yourself, go to stemandgreen.co.uk

James Greig

From our MP

Last month I wrote about our BEAT surgery over in East Stratton and the work, alongside local councillors and our new Police & Crime Commissioner, to deter a repeat of the illegal pony and trap racing on the A33. Happily, I can report good news in that respect as a major police presence on the road in June did what it was there to do. I was pleased to drop down to chat and thank the officers on the ground. So it's good news but we don't rest on our laurels and I continue to liaise closely with PCC Donna Jones and senior officers.



Linked to some extent are new powers we are taking through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill currently making its way through Parliament. I spoke at its crunch Report Stage last month in support of the clauses which will introduce a new criminal offence where a *“person resides or intends to reside on any public or private land without permission and has caused, or is likely to cause, significant harm, obstruction, or harassment or distress.”*

While the vast majority of travellers are law-abiding citizens, illegal sites can cause distress and misery to those who

live nearby so this is important, notwithstanding my desire – when the Bill is considered in the Lords – for amendments to clarify that owners of motorhomes cannot be unintentionally swept up by these measures.

Secondly, it was great to be also on hand to award the prizes at the Dever Society's Spring Photography Competition. The overall winner, "Grow Your Own in Lockdown" by Anna Parker, is something to behold. See www.deversociety.org,

July saw the first of a series of village surgeries being held by our energetic new City councillor, Fiona Isaacs. Cllr Caroline Horrill and I joined Fiona for a special event in the middle of Easton which, despite the rain, was a real success. Look out for details of when Fiona will be in your community by following her on Facebook; www.fb.com/FionalisaacsAlresford And finally, I have been very active, as always, scrutinising the end of lockdown as we move past 19 July and Step 4 of the Government's Roadmap. In my opinion the real issue, one of the issues of our time going forward, is not this law or that regulation/piece of advice; it is whether we really mean it when we say we must 'learn to live with Covid'. I predict many battles to come as some, willingly or otherwise, find it harder to let go of the almighty state telling us what we can and cannot do than they might like to admit. I will, as ever, keep you all posted.

Please find much more of my work, locally and in Westminster, at www.SteveBrine.com but please follow me on Facebook for more instant updates: www.fb.com/SteveBrineMP Enjoy your summer (unnecessary pings notwithstanding) where you can.

Steve Brine

MP for Winchester & Itchen Valley

Itchen Abbas Primary School: visits to the Itchen

This summer, Otters Class have enjoyed three local fieldwork visits to the river Itchen. Whilst we were there, we were involved in many activities including examining bugs and invertebrates, identifying plants and trees, observing the river and measuring its velocity.

Our first outing was organised and led by Winchester College and involved kick samples and bushcraft.

For our second outing we were very lucky because we were granted special access to the river through someone's garden. Once we arrived, we took time to observe the river and look for specific plants and insects. We took many pictures of snails, caterpillars, dragonflies and looked for signs of riverside animals. Mrs Rogers helped us on our trip and went into the river to get kick samples for us to explore.

Then we split up into two groups: one identifying fish and water nymphs and the other measuring the velocity of the river.

To identify some of the water species, we used a special classification chart to separate the different invertebrates





into sections. We then went into the woods to find plant specimens. Whilst we were exploring the woods, we discovered an animal trap that recorded the paws of an animal using a special material.

Our group was measuring the speed of the river (velocity). First we measured how long a part of the river was using a trundle wheel; it measured 84 metres long. Then one person took their position at the start of the 84 metres and another person stood at the end then the last person timed. The person who stood at the beginning threw a stick in and the timer started. Once the stick had reached the end of the 84 metres the person at the end shouted stop and the timer was stopped.

The stick took 128 seconds to travel 84m which told us that the velocity of that part of the river is 0.66 m/s. Although it was raining, we had lots of fun!

For our final fieldwork focus we were identifying the variation of different trees and wildlife species found along the river. We finished by feeding some pigs - what an unexpected surprise. We are so lucky to have such a beautiful and diverse environment on our doorstep.

By Flossy and Esmé – Year 5



Editor's note: Kick sampling is a standard and widely used method for sampling the invertebrates living on the bed of a stream or river. It involves holding a net in the direction of flow, with the open net mouth facing upstream.. One foot is used to kick the bottom of the stream, dislodging the substrate in the direction of the net. Animals dislodged from the substrate will be washed into the net.

Mathematical churchyard maintenance

This month, one of the churchyard volunteers had arrived in her new car. It had a 67 number plate.

I commented that in 1967, my age plus those of my two fellow co-workers also totalled 67 and the age of the eldest of us in that year was a prime number.

I knew the middle worker was two years older than me and our span of ages was also a prime number.

How old are we now? There are a few solutions but only one is reasonable.

Alan Algebra

Do please send us in your own puzzles if you wish. They must be original and not just copied from another book or magazine. Ed.

$$\pi \approx 3.14 \div 5^2$$

$$\sqrt{2^{1+2 \cdot 3}} \quad (1-2)+3$$



Summer weddings in the Valley





Food Spy: Inn the Park, Winchester



The chips were lovely. Generous portions of beautifully-cooked salt-sprinkled fried potatoes in ceramic flower pots came as standard with most of the dishes. The staff were plentiful for the

half-full restaurant and it was nicely laid out, if a little gloomy in places. Lighting is more important than restaurateurs might think; not everyone has 20/20 eyesight and eating in the dark isn't conducive to enjoyment.

Anyway, the excellent Hattingley English sparkling wine helped us to choose our food from the rather small-font menu. Tip – don't forget to take your best spectacles. The somewhat misdescribed Spatchcock Chicken thankfully turned out to be a spatchcock half-chicken; a complete bird would have defeated most diners. Served well-cooked but yet still fairly moist, it was a filling main course, as was the whole plaice served to another guest. That in itself, with extra crab meat sprinkled in top, was a complete meal, negating the need for the Jersey Royals ordered as a side dish. The Rump of Short Horn Beef was also declared delicious but what let the side down was the Cornish Hake "al forno". This large cut of fish arrived almost raw and had to be sent back for further cooking. Even then it wasn't really cooked through. Fine if you like West-Country-style sushi but not really what you expect from a basically British-themed menu. And it was the only dish that didn't come with those lovely chips; this diner had to steal



some of mine.

Puddings were varied in their success. The large Eton Mess contested with a tiny portion of a chocolate fudge cake. The Bay Leaf Pannacotta didn't taste much of bay leaves but the cheeseboard was pronounced very much to that connoisseur's taste.

Inn the Park had allocated us two and a half hours for our sitting and the waitress was quick to remind us of that deadline when we looked like ordering some coffees. Not really the attitude one hopes for when having an evening out with old friends. But it did allow us to get home before dark.

An average bill of £45 per diner was acceptable but we think other Winchester restaurants offer better food and better value. The unhurried Chesil Rectory, owned by the same people, remains our favourite venue.

Food Spy

From Winchester City Councillor Fiona Isaacs

A commitment made, a promise kept: Before the elections in May this year, due to COVID -19 restrictions, I wasn't able to get to around the villages as much as I would have liked. I made a commitment that once elected, I would ensure that I spent time meeting more residents and understand the key issues affecting the

rural villages.

I spent a lovely, if wet, morning getting to know more of the issues effecting residents of Easton. Thank you to everyone who stopped by and to all those who have actively contacted me since my election. I was kindly joined by Steve Brine MP and Cllr Caroline Horrill. Understandably, high on everyone's minds was the J9 M3 project and the potential impact this would have to the village. I have and will continue to feedback all your concerns about this and other issues. Police surgery: I am delighted to report that after speaking with our lovely community police, I requested that they might do some visits to Easton and Itchen Valley like they do in Alresford. They have confirmed to me that they would be delighted to do this and plans are underway for this to take place on 21 August (see Whats On). In the meantime, please report anything via 101 so that things are logged as they need to keep track of any patterns etc.

Grass cutting issues and project: This month I attended the WCC project meeting on some of the issues and feedback that residents had fed back. Overwhelmingly the feedback to myself was about the issues of visibility. I requested that they reintroduce the safety cuts and sight lines in order to ensure that people were kept safe. Reports of concerns were from parents with children cycling and drivers who could not see clearly round bends or junctions. It was confirmed that this would be reintroduced. There needs to be a careful balance with encouraging wildflower development but keeping the area safe and attractive to visitors. Business and Housing Policy committee: Since my last report I



attended the business and housing committee. The High street priority plan for April 2021- March 2022 was discussed. I was disappointed to see that the plan was still based on out-of-date data. The report covered 150 individuals across the district from October 2019-November 2019 pre Covid on asking what they thought what Alresford and other areas needed. Apparently 67% said Alresford needs nothing. This is no reflection on the officers who have worked hard on issues, however, how disappointing that it is not based on current information from the stakeholder meetings taking place. The surrounding villages, local businesses and residents all have very strong feeling on the issues and concerns we have and that these must be accounted for in any plan moving forward.

Highways: The issues relating to highways are cross-parish and cross-party. It has been expressed by residents and parish Councils that any group formed to discuss this needs to be just that, cross party and cross parish. I completely agree and have raised this with Jackie Porter and other Cllrs . I await their response to this.

WCC Cllr Fiona Isaacs
fisaacs@winchester.gov.uk
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Thank you from Lucy and Alex Pease

Lucy and I would like to give a heartfelt thanks to all of you who were involved in organising and contributing to the wonderful three parties that marked the end of our ministry in the Itchen Valley Parish. Thank you for the food, the drink, the sound system, and the huge amount of organisation and correspondence that must have been involved in getting it off the ground during a pandemic. Thank you also to all those who prayed for good weather. What fun it was!

When we first came to the Itchen Valley, Revd Andrew Mickelfield remarked on how well the Itchen Valley organised parties of this kind ("the Itchen Valley specialises in drinks and nibbles"). Of course we would usually have had a party like this as the warm-up (or incentive to attend) our Annual Parochial Church Meeting at Avington Park, but because of the pandemic this has not been possible for the last couple of years.

But this really was the party of parties – with sommeliers, chefs with a range of bites to eat (including gluten free), car park marshals and a rolling group of guests who kept coming and coming. We loved being able to chat to everyone. We so enjoyed the 'order, order' from Theo to start the presentations (you should have been Speaker Theo) and his energetic clapping after each speech (with no lack of enthusiasm even though he had heard our brief addresses three times)!

Most of all we were completely blown away by the stunning Stem and Green flowers and the beautiful glass bowl which you gave to us. Engraved by Phil Lawson Johnston with a picture of each



of the churches in the parish and engraved with some very encouraging words, it is something that we will keep at the centre of our family home for the rest of our lives. As


with all the best presents, both the flowers and the bowl have greater resonance because the flowers were grown by our very own James Greig in the Mezgers' field next door to where the party was held and the engraver of the bowl is related both to Gilly Greenwood and Nicky Barber and has a godparent connection to the Wright children – symbolising the unity of our church community, as Tim Clapp said, which makes it so much like a family.

Thank you too for the wonderful speeches from Julia Wright, Tim Clapp and Lavinia Owen – so encouraging - and the generous hospitality of Theo and Judith in Jude's stunning garden. And talking of gardens thank you to all who contributed both to the bowl and to the very generous cheque for us to spend in our garden at The Mill House in Chilland which will significantly assist our plans here! Thank you all for your great generosity.

I have one more service to lead and one wedding to conduct (Freddie Williams) and then we will take a low profile for a few months to allow the very excellent Revd Peter Walker to get his feet under the desk and onto the paths around the Valley. I know that you will welcome him and Georgie here as warmly as you have welcomed Lucy and me and am confident that he will be a great leader for the church community here.

Alex and Lucy Pease

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Save the Dates

Itchen Valley Flower and Produce Festival postponed to 2022

11 September 2021 7.00 Party in Easton Village Hall

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



Plant of the month: wild carrot

This ancient ancestor of the tasty orange carrot produces an inedible stout root. The central red flowers of its display were variously used by herbalists in the past against epilepsy, stitch and kidney stones. A remote consultation with a GP is now recommended.

Simon and Dorothy Broadley

Our Wild Valley: lizards

Near our home in Itchen Abbas, on my sprint around the block before picking up the kids, I was so pleased to see this mum-to-be. She was lying on exposed rabbit diggings beside a hedgerow, soaking up some warmth from a rather dull sky. I snuck in for a closer look and a photo, pretending to be part of the hedge. She had an intricate pattern on her back and a very large tummy. It made my week, as living here for ten

years now this was the first common lizard I have seen locally, having surveyed for them for many years in Sussex.

They tend to be more visible in heathland and by the coast, but are also fond of railway track embankments. Perhaps she is a remnant from when the railway tracks were managed for the trains, the banks providing many sunbathing spots for reptiles.

The females incubate their eggs internally and give birth in August to inch long lizards, just like an adder or slow worm would do. A grass snake will lay eggs. Newts are often a bit smaller and slimmer but can be mistaken for lizards. Newts have smooth skin while lizards are scaly, and a lizard, when warm, can move very speedily if disturbed.

Hope everyone can enjoy a relaxed summer, keep your face shining out to the sunshine and stay well.

Sophie Rogers



Letter from the Parish

I write in the hope that, now lockdown has lifted, a sense of normality is about to return. Travel to foreign countries now seems possible, facemasks are voluntary, and we finally have light at the end of the tunnel. Many of us have now received two jabs but there also still remains some reticence fully to let go of our cautious approach to life. As we turn the page into a new chapter of this pandemic, the question for me is what have we learnt during this period of lockdown? Prior to this disease arriving at our shores, few of us would have heard of a Zoom call, none of us would have quarantined or even had to shield, and I doubt whether anybody would have even heard of the term “furloughed”, or maybe that is just my understanding, and not to forget that frustrating phrase “you are on mute”! In the grand scheme, most of these are mild frustrations but for those who have lost friends and family, the impact has been much harder.

The full consequences of this disease I suspect may still be some months or years away to determine, but one thing we can all be certain of is the impact on our relationships with friends, family and colleagues. An example of this is the recent publication from the Office of National Statistics which has noted an increase in loneliness during the pandemic, increasing from 5% to 7% of the adult population (3.7 million) stating they were “often or always lonely”. The mental health foundation found that 24% of people had felt lonely due to COVID with young people representing the highest loneliness group at 44% of their subset. The foundation determined that feelings of loneliness had doubled during lockdown and warned of “long-

term risk to mental health”. Even within our small Valley community of 1500 these are sobering numbers and if this is to be believed there will be somebody on a road or in a village struggling.

Working from home has become the new norm for many of us and whilst we can keep in touch through the digital screen, it is no replacement for real human contact. My own team’s recent return to the office has been a real boost to all and many have remarked how much they have enjoyed being back together. The opportunity to meet and discuss our work has made such a difference and we look forward to the days we are together. We cannot deny that us humans are social creatures who really benefit from these interactions.

So have there been any positive learnings of this lockdown period? For myself, a highlight was attending the Alpha course led by Alex Pease last autumn. The opportunity to discuss and explore the Christian faith in a calm and relaxed manner was a real pleasure and a moment of sanctuary in a busy life. There were enjoyable and engaging discussions throughout the 12 week course and I have met some great new people.

In conclusion, our human connections are more important than ever at this moment. In Matthew 22v39, Jesus states “Thou shalt love your neighbour as thyself” as his second commandment which is central to the Christian faith. Perhaps now more than ever is a time to take heed of this, to pop our head over the garden fence and check on our neighbours. They may be one of these statistics who consider themselves “often or always lonely”.

Tim Clapp

Itchen Valley Churches

1st August - 10am Informal Garden Family Worship
Southwood House, Itchen Abbas [more details on website](#)

8th August - 10am Parish Communion
live at St Mary's, Easton and on Zoom

15th August - 10am Informal Garden Valley Worship
Martyr Worthy Manor, Martyr Worthy [more details on website](#)

22nd August - 10am Parish Communion
live at St Mary's, Easton and on Zoom

22nd August - 6pm Evensong
live at St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy

29th August - 10am Parish Communion
live at St Mary's, Easton and on Zoom

During August our usual informal services will be a lot more informal than usual! By kind permission of both Nick and Lavinia Owen and John and Nicky Barber we will be holding these relaxed services in their lovely gardens. Everyone is welcome to come along, please look out for posts on the Church website for more information.

At the time of going to press we are still waiting for guidance from the Church of England regarding the lifting of restrictions. We will post an update and more information on our website as soon as we get it.

Rector - Currently Vacant

LLM - Mr Gerry Stacey
gerry.Stacey@biblesociety.org.uk
07554 438973

Parish Administrator - Beccy Clark
admin@itchenvalleychurches.org
01962 779845

www.itchenvalleychurches.org

Itchen Abbas and Avington Village Hall says thank you

The village hall's Annual General Meeting took place in July. The chair, Christopher Langford, remarked on how difficult the last year had been, with the hall being shut most of the time and only the Montessori School remaining in residence. Lack of rental income was offset by substantial government grants but he felt it was important to look after the building and grounds for whenever bookings might resume.

The meeting concluded with bouquets for the two Sues who had stepped down from the committee. Sue Humphrey had been involved since at least the 1980s, helping to organise and cater for events in both the old and new village halls. Sue Hitchen had been

treasurer for almost ten years before handing over to Corinne Kosok. Grateful thanks were expressed to them both for their support and enthusiasm over the years.

Vernon Tottle



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Bird of the month



The lovely avocet is the emblem of the RSPB and represents the success of conservation and protection after its return in the 1940s. It feeds in an idiosyncratic way, swishing its long decurved bill from side to side to catch worms and crustacea. Look out for it on coastal lagoons.

Elaine Labram

Comings and goings

We welcome John Love and Phil Jacob to Mayblossom House (the former village hall in Itchen Abbas). Both are doctors from London, looking forward to country living after their flat in town. Meanwhile, Lyn and Chris Jones, Itchen Valley News distributors, have moved from Mayblossom House to Field House, further west along the B3047.

Vernon Tottle

British Empire Medal

Vera Collings of Martyr Worthy received the BEM medal for services to the community, presented by the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Nigel Atkinson. Vera ran a RVS (originally WRVS) lunch club with a membership



of forty over 65s (mostly 80 and 90 year olds) for over twenty years. The club was held at St. Barnabas Church Hall at Weeke and originally the lunches were all cooked on site, though latterly meals were brought in from the Winchester University. She was also a volunteer at the Royal Hampshire County Hospital for a similar length of time.

Editor

From Winchester City Councillors Russell Gordon-Smith and Margot Power

It is hard to be sure which part of the City Council's work is of the greatest interest to the residents of the Itchen Valley. Interest can perhaps be judged by the



numbers who turn up to meetings to listen and to speak in the public sections of such events. Our experience suggests that large planning committees considering major projects draw the biggest crowds, financial committees the smallest. However, this interest does not necessarily equate to the work actually undertaken



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by Councillors and the time spent on them. At the risk of boring some readers, we are including some information on the major planning issues.



M3 Junction 9:

The Consultation on this has now closed. A 35 page letter of comments and questions prepared by the WCC officers was submitted to Highways England. This project is considered a NSIP (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects) under the Planning Act 2008, which is intended to shorten the planning process. The submission will go before the Planning Inspectorate in early 2022, with the aim of a decision being made by the Secretary of state in early 2023. We will continue to push to achieve the best possible scheme, both in the construction phases and in the long term.

Other NSIPs: There are two other projects in the district that fall into the NSIP category: the replacement ESSO pipeline and the AQUIND power line. The ESSO pipeline is a replacement and one of many similar pipelines that cross the district. Most of these are almost undetectable after the restoration process, apart from discrete marker posts. Time is being spent to ensure that disruption during construction is minimised, particularly to hedgerows. The AQUIND project is more contentious. Both of these are a long way from the Itchen Valley, so they are included only for information.

Central Winchester Regeneration: A great deal of the Councillors' time, particularly of those in the Cabinet, has been taken up working to move this

difficult project forward. The number of developers, supposedly expert, who go bankrupt is evidence of the many pitfalls of the development process. WCC is a comparatively small council and with limited resources both in finance and staff. The council understands only too well the need to move the project forward and has worked out a course that uses a single developer, hedged in with safeguards that will avoid another repeat of the Henderson fiasco but that will deliver identified socio-economic benefits for our ancient and wonderful city and the district that surrounds it.

New Local Plan: Work continues to process the many responses received on the Strategic and Priorities consultation. From these, a development strategy will be put together, identifying specific sites proposed for development, to accommodate growth and to propose a range of other policies to support the implementation of the new Plan. This forms a draft local plan, which will be submitted for further consultation.

Following this stage, a final draft is developed, which has to be legally compliant and sound when assessed against the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This is then submitted to the HM Inspectorate for examination and (we hope) finally to be judged 'sound'. The Inspector will issue a Final Report and, providing that the Plan is found to be 'sound', the council may adopt the Plan as soon as practicable following receipt of the Inspector's report unless the Secretary of State intervenes. Once adopted the Local Plan will form the main part of the statutory development plan.

Planning enforcement: It is hard to think of a topic that causes more fury

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to the public and to councillors, both in parishes and the city, who serve on planning committees. (Not to mention the planning officers!) It is though perfectly legal to build a house or whatever, without planning permission, and then apply retrospectively for planning permission. The same applies to varying planning conditions or amending designs. WCC has suffered from an understaffed enforcement section. However, with new and committed staff and some re-organisation, a start will be made to being more robust in dealing with breaches of planning conditions. However, there are many problem sites, (thankfully outside the ward!) that require a lot of officer time, which need to be addressed.

Margot Power 01962 734167

mpower@winchester.gov.uk

Russell Gordon-Smith 01962 733219

rgordon-smith@winchester.gov.uk

Be tick aware!

Watch out! There are ticks about! It's the perfect conditions for these mini beasts.



These tiny insects, which can transmit bacteria such as Lyme disease, can be found throughout the year but are most active between spring and autumn. They are typically found in woodland, grassland, moorland or heathland but are also found in urban

parks and gardens. Here's a helpful reminder of some simple tips if you're out walking:

Avoid long grass

Wear appropriate clothing (a long-sleeve shirt and trousers tucked into your socks)

Consider using an insect repellent

Wear light coloured fabrics that may help you spot a tick on your clothes

Inspect your skin for ticks, particularly at the end of the day, including your head, neck and skin folds (armpits, groin and waistband)

Check your children's head and neck areas, including their scalp

Check your pets too

If you do get bitten by a tick, removing it quickly and correctly can help to reduce any potential risk. The only safe way to remove a tick is to use a pair of fine-tipped tweezers, or an easy-to-use device which can be purchased from pharmacies or vets. Then grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible. Pull upwards slowly and firmly, as mouthparts left in the skin can cause a local infection.

Once removed, apply antiseptic to the bite area and keep an eye on it for several weeks for any changes. Contact your GP if you begin to feel unwell or develop a circular red skin rash, often described as a bull's-eye, or any other sort of unusual skin rash. Remember to tell the GP that you were bitten by a tick.

See NHS Choices for more information on signs, symptoms and treatments for Lyme disease.

www.nhs.uk/conditions/lyme-disease

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I've just had my number two jab
I hope it won't leave a big scab
The hole is so small
It hurt not at all
When young, I'd have said it was fab.



The Practical Gardener

I have tried eight different varieties of tomato this year and given plants to a lot of people: Shirley, Big Daddy, Golden Sunrise, Tomande, Sungold, Gardener's Delight, Heinz 1350 and Tumbling Tom Red. Many of these I have not sown before. Most are inside in the greenhouse but a few are outside. Home grown tomatoes have much more flavour and thinner skins than those from a shop. But is it worth the effort? They are certainly demanding, requiring almost daily attention: watering, supports, pinching out, cutting off leaves, spraying, fertilising and the rest. You have to be careful if planting outside to avoid using ground that has even the slightest hint of potatoes or you will get blight. Outside pots need to be fairly large just to provide an even quantity of water.

Oh yes and tomatoes have all sorts of hang-ups. I check and water mine every day and very carefully. Yet I still have blossom end rot just here and there. Not good, but the experts say it's down to watering – tosh! My tomatoes also

attract whitefly, however this year I have sprayed almost every day with just a touch of washing up liquid and it has helped. I have also added some Epsom Salts, not because the plants are constipated but I sensed, in yellowing leaves, a lack of magnesium, an essential trace element. The first tomatoes were ripe by 20 June and by 2 July some of the larger ones were ready.

July and August are months to enjoy but busy for harvesting. The pea crop (sown in late March) has been good together with broad beans, courgettes and cucumbers, oh and a very special cauliflower. I think that is one of the most difficult vegetables to grow so it's always good to have some success. This is also time to harvest onions and garlic and both need to be very dry to be stored. I leave them in the sun for a month and then put them into nets hung in the garage to allow air to circulate.

The currant crop (check the spelling!!) has also been great probably due to a very wet summer. The thrushes love my currants, so I have a very elaborate netting to protect the fruit but it's not perfect. Mr Thrush is a greedy invader. Likewise, the raspberry crop is good and full of flavour. These are such easy crops to grow and once the nets are in place, not too much to do.

Because it has been wet, slugs and snails are unusually active. I am using up my blue pellets in enclosed spaces and now have a new natural source of pellet which is called "slug defence" and has many claims. Time will tell if it is effective. We should not, of course, use the old blue pellets today where other wildlife has access. I have also observed a huge amount of blackfly on my beans.

Where I wonder is their natural predator – ladybirds?

I have one section of garden that might be described as “wild”. It’s practically untouched and mostly shaded under a mature beech tree. All sorts of plants thrive there and possibly wildlife too (not the boys next door!). However, I must make a distinction between a wild, uncultivated area and an area of wildflowers. I was given some wildflower seed at church which I have scattered in one part of the garden, we shall see what results but these are introduced and not naturally occurring in the garden. I’m told I should also get a rattle as long as it is yellow (*Rhinanthus minor*) which is said to be key to a wildflower meadow.

There’s a lot of debate about lawns today. Many of the experts are questioning why we have so many neatly cut grassed areas. I don’t dare to criticise the RHS, who say uncut lawns are needed to encourage bees. Well I can report my garden is full of bees and that’s due to an abundance of flowers year round. My own view is playing any sort of games on a lawn of uncut grass is impossible. So, I am at present not convinced. But don’t worry. The country is being covered in concrete today so lawns and large gardens will gradually disappear. I also have news from WGM who have told me their business in ride-on mowers is slowly declining.

The herb garden here is amazing and I was pleased to see a trough growing fresh herbs outside *The Plough*. There may be a few who do not know that not all herbs come in a plastic bag from the supermarket. Herbs are so easy to grow and can be in almost any sort of

container. Many also flourish the year round. No excuses then – get growing herbs!

Some of the sunflowers are now above 2m. And my best cut flowers are alstroemeria.

Happy Gardening!

Tony Gaster

Local monthly information

Itchen Valley area waste collections in August

Black bins and brown garden bins on Friday 13 and 27 August. Green bins on Fridays 6 and 20 August. Glass boxes on Friday 20 August.

Farmers’ Market in Winchester

Sundays 8 and 29 August.

Parish Council Full Meeting

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