

Upton St Leonards Life

incorporating Church News

Issue 113

January 2024



A very Healthy and Happy 2024 to all our readers from The USL Life Team



This could have been a competition to identify who was delivering newsletters in Upton but for many, the trousers unfortunately give it away!!

On behalf of the wider newsletter team and village residents, a big thank you to everyone who delivers USL Life month in month out in all weathers - it is very much appreciated

Please put a date in your diaries for the summer!!

There will be a Barn Dance/Fun Evening at Portway Farm on Saturday 29th June 2024 and the proceeds will be donated to our Church Roof Fund - see page 6

Editorial

I was recently informed of a thing called ChatGPT which is an Artificial Intelligence based tool (chatbot). It can do all sorts of things such as creating poems new year resolutions and many others. The Chatbot was asked to provide a new year message for residents of Upton and the result is shown below.



"May the upcoming year in Upton St Leonard's be filled with joy, prosperity, and moments that leave lasting smiles on your faces. Happy New Year to all!"

It can be accessed as follows: -

1. Go to chat.openai.com or the mobile app, and log in or sign up (it's free).
2. Type your prompt in the message box on the ChatGPT home page.
3. Once ChatGPT spits out a response, you have a handful of options: Enter a new prompt. Regenerate the response. Copy the response. Share the response.

Have a look at it and "get down with the kids". Other AI apps are available.

Peter

Raise the Roof The Church Roof Fund

Raise the Roof fund update.

Thanks

Once again many, many thanks to all those people who organised events and all the very kind people who supported a number of fund-raising events throughout December. Just to highlight a few – the Christmas Songs and Carols with Gloucester Brass and Upton's TLC Singers raised £820, the Christmas raffle raised £1100. Thank you to the Brownies who raised £85 from their church service and to all the hard-working people who organised the events. The Raise the Roof fund total now stands at £141,000.

The BMI are running a Comedy night on 14th January in support of the Raise the Roof fund. Many thanks to the BMI for choosing the Raise the Roof appeal as their charity for 2023/24. Please support their events if you are able.

Grateful thanks to our youngest fund raisers – Henry, aged 9 and his brother, Atticus, aged 6 who raised £70 from making and selling gifts for Halloween (see page 20). They asked that the proceeds should be put into the Raise the Roof Fund. Thanks to Mum, Ellie, for bringing their generosity to our attention. If you know of any young (or even younger) fundraisers who might like to be featured in this update – please let us know.

Do you have any fund raising ideas?

A date for your diary - a fund raising "Ideas" Meeting is to be held on the 27th February at 7pm in the School Room. If you have a great fund-raising idea please come along and talk about it. All ideas will be considered . . . such as is there anyone who may be able and willing to organise a sponsored fun run next summer?

Proceeds would go to the Raise the Roof fund. If you think you are the person we need to set this idea in motion please come along to the meeting and make yourself known or contact Richard Sugdon to have a chat.

Don't forget to keep taking those scenic photographs of St Leonards Church to prepare for the Photographic/Calendar competition. Submissions will be requested in July 2024.

Q&A's:

Q: I still have a donation envelope from a few months ago – can I still use it?

A: Yes, please do use it. You can always speak to Gill Howell for advice if you need help.

What's Been Happening in Upton?

Ladies Probus Club

The Ladies Probus meeting for November was an early Christmas treat - the TLC choir regaled us all with their harmonics before we adjourned to Bowden Hall for what has become our annual lunch. This was well presented, as ever, & enjoyed by everyone.

We have been busy preparing what we hope will be a full, varied & interesting Programme for 2024.

Please come & join us at the BMI for our first meeting of the year - 10am on Wednesday 24 January 2024 for a Bring & Buy Sale with proceeds towards the Church Roof Repair Fund.

Christmas Songs and Carols - 10th December

I eagerly look forward each year now to the Gloucester Brass and TLC singers Christmas Concert. I just love that warm sound of the band as it fills the church, and TLC always put on a good selection for us.

Once again it was a treat. I particularly liked a piece new to me - "Everlasting Light" - which is a setting for band incorporating the carol "O Little Town of Bethlehem". The band seemed to capture the spirit of the piece really well.

As always, the audience was invited to join in some traditional carols, and for a change it was done very informally, seated, without word sheets - I thought that was better than standing and shuffling bits of paper.

Of the TLC singers' songs, I thought the best (of some good pieces) was "Still, still still", which we were told was their own favourite, and it showed in their singing.

Many thanks to Sylvia Ardron and TLC, to Mark Knight and Gloucester Brass, and to Gill Howell and her team of helpers stewarding and serving very welcome mulled wine. The church looked magnificently colourful and bright with all the Christmas trees.

Andy Russell

PS There are some pictures of the event on page 20 and in the church pages taken by Rachel Downey, who is studying photography for her A-Levels

Upton WI Report

"Christmas comes but once a year, and when it comes, it brings good cheer," and so it was with our speaker Bill Church, ex-headmaster and story-teller extraordinaire (based in Gloucester, see www.thestorytraveller.co.uk).

Setting the scene were fairy lights and tables adorned with lanterns. Bill was dressed in black fedora hat and smart blue waistcoat. He told stories of intrigue, mystery, forests, lakes, India, and finished with a Christmas tale. He held our attention, picking up every word, not only narrating but acting character parts, in stories he wrote mostly himself. Bill was very warmly applauded.

We wish all our members a Happy New Year.

We have no January meeting, so we meet again on Monday 5 February, 2pm in the Pavilion, to hear Professor Chris Pearce on the subject "Dream to Reality – a history of the world land speed record." All are warmly welcomed.

Kathy Quant



Events at The BMI

On Saturday 25th November we were entertained by a local band "Buck and the Tasty Tones", playing lots of tunes to get people dancing. A great evening.

The BMI pensioners' lunch took place on Saturday 9th December - see page 20 for more information and pictures.

Kenny entertained us after lunch, keeping everyone in a party mood. Mike Long, president of the BMI thanked the organisers and Brian and Lorraine for the day and said how impressed he was when he first arrived and saw the BMI looking so festive. It was a great afternoon – a sparkling way to welcome Christmas.

What's Been Happening in Upton?

Monday Coffee Club

On Monday 11th December the BMI hosted 32 of us for a splendid Christmas lunch. Our thanks go out to Lorraine for cooking such a lovely meal, Keith and Ann for serving and waiting on us plus Brian and staff for seeing to our liquid refreshments at the bar.

The empty plates certainly summed up how well the meal was received by all in a very warm and relaxing atmosphere. The Village is blessed to have the BMI with a very active and supportive Committee, together with Brian & Lorraine along with all the staff involved providing a friendly service to all.

Monday coffee club has some time off over the Christmas period with the next meeting being held on Monday 1st January 2024. We regularly have 40+ at our meetings and we always welcome any new attendees who want to come and see what it is all about.

Mike, Marilyn, Mandy & Gill

TWYVER WI MEETING 11th DECEMBER 2023

Our last meeting of 2023! How time flies.

We were treated to a wonderful evening of song by our lovely local ladies choir TLC. It is now 10 years since the choir was founded, and the ladies are still in fine voice.



With carol sheets at the ready to join in when requested, the music began with "Why we sing" their go-to starter followed by many wonderful tunes of Christmas including the favourite "Christmas Pudding Story" - words by Alan Titchmarsh - which always raises the spirits.

Great singing ladies! Followed of course by mulled wine and mince pies. Greetings to everyone for Christmas and New Year. Our first meeting of 2024 will be on the 8th January, all welcome.

Linda Munnoch

Hadwen Health PPG Update

The PPG met four times in 2023, March, June, Sept and Dec. The role of the PPG is to be a support as well as a critical friend. This proves very useful as the members can make suggestions and ask questions that otherwise might be more challenging for patients in their relationship with their clinician. PPG has 17 members and is keen to recruit a member with experience of disability or special needs. The minutes of each meeting are available on the website under Practice Information.

There have been some very positive developments at Hadwen over the year. Staff recruitment has improved and at the Sept meeting we learned that they had a full complement of Gps, which is hard to achieve in this time of GP shortages. Hadwen has been encouraged to collect feedback from patients as a basis of learning and improving the service. This has taken the form of text requests from around 200 patients a month who had engagements with Hadwen. This enables learning to take place. Patients tend to respond when they feel strongly about an issue.

They now have three What meetings asking the questions: What has gone well? What's not gone well? What would we want to do differently? This is a great initiative and is bringing the spotlight onto developing good practice.

It is pleasing to report that waiting times for appointments have improved and now 90% of appointments are within the 20 day guideline set by the NHS. Those outside the 20 days are appropriate where a 6 week review is advised. If a patient needs to be seen urgently we are asked to ring up on the day and triage will advise on the most appropriate plan for you.

Things do not always go to plan and if you have an issue you can message them directly by using the envelope symbol on the home page. This will get you to the right person to deal with your concern.

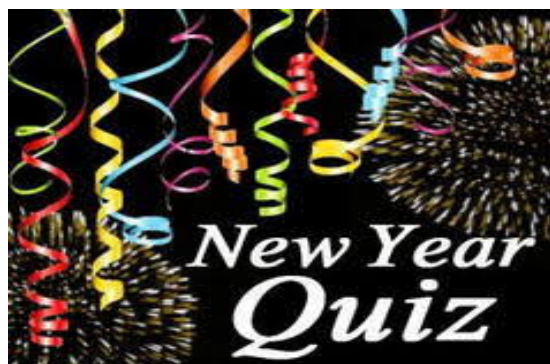
They now have a new MD, who is Dr Ruth Thompson. She has been at Hadwen for eight years and has an interest in frailty. She is also the lead for medical students who will return to the practice shortly. There have been Health and Fitness programmes at Hadwen this year and these have been very successful, with weight and B/P reductions. A CQC visit looked at data in Oct and they were pleased with what they found.

The PPG has a positive influence on the Hadwen and our engagement helps the staff see the patients perspective on their work.

Millie Barnes/ Hadwen PPG Chair.

What's Coming Up in Upton?

Saturday 6th January 2024



Post Christmas/New Year Quiz
For members and signed in guests
From 8.00pm

Please add your name to the booking sheet on the BMI noticeboard by Thursday, 4th January 2024
£1.50 per person (Minimum £6.00 per table)

Saturday 20th January

Entertainment Night from 8.00p.m.
with "Over the Hill"

For members and signed in guests



COMEDY NIGHT AT THE BMI
SUNDAY 14th - JANUARY 2024
From 8.00pm

Hosted once again by Nik Hill
Gloucester boy, Silver Stand-up Award Winner at
Leicester Comedy Festival 2022

Featuring
Danielle Johns

This girl can hold her own with anyone and will enthrall any audience with her life experiences

Ashley Frieze

A larger than life character with a different view on the world,

an accomplished musician with a great voice

Kevin Daniel

A relative newcomer, who has made sterling performances at

venues he's played, who took his one man show to Edinburgh in 2023, and has a reputation for excellent audience repartee.

Tickets for sale @ £6 per person for BMI Members only

(90% of ticket sales will be added to the BMI Charity for 2023-24, Upton St Leonards Church Roof Fund)

Please note, the comedy night may include adult humour

What's Coming Up in Upton?

The Upstagers

will present

“The Hopeful Diamond Caper”

A comedy play by Patricia Winter
and Carl Megill at

Upton St Leonards Village Hall on
15th, 16th and 17th February 2024

Performances at 7.30pm

(Doors open at 7pm)

Tickets £11 (£8 under 16)

To book tickets go to

www.ticketsource.co.uk/theupstagers
or

Phone Ann Pearson

Sunday 21st January

Sunday lunchtime Jazz
from 1.00-3.30pm.
with “Cygnet”

For members and
signed in guests



SATURDAY 18TH MAY - Upton Village Hall

A NOTE FOR YOUR DIARY

The Village Hall is putting on a fun evening with
Entertainment, Food and a Bar to raise funds for the
Hall. Keep the date free.

For more information see next month's magazine.

Barn Dance - 29th June 2024

The last Barn Dance held by the Herring family (Portway Farm) was in 2018 and everyone who attended said what a great evening it was. It combined a traditional barn dance followed by a great rock band who have already agreed to support the evening again in 2024.

The Herrings have generously agreed to host another Barn Dance on 29th June 2024 in aid of the Church Raise The Roof Fund.

The details are still being developed but we are currently identifying a suitable traditional Ceilidh Band to start the evening followed by the rock band and ending with a disco for those who still have some energy left!! Food and drink will be available on the night. It is being pulled together as a family affair so children will be very welcome.

Apart from supporting the church, this is a lovely social opportunity for people in the village and surrounding areas to get together and have a great night out so please let your family and friends know and make it a date for your diaries.

More information will be provided in USL as details are worked up but tickets will probably be available around April 2024.



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Arts Page

This New Year begins not with peace overall but with conflicts in many parts of the world. This has always been so and poets throughout the ages have recognised and written about conflict.

From THE FORMER AGE by Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400) after Ovid

What should it have availed to war?
There lay no profit, there was no richesse,
But cursed was the time (I dare well say)
That men first did their sweaty business,
To grub up metal, lurking in darkness,
And in rivers first gems sought.
Alas! Then sprang up all the cursedness
Of covetise, that first our sorrow bought!

Extract from DOVER BEACH by Matthew Arnold (1822 - 1888)

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Aegean and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery.

DIRGE FOR A SOLDIER by George Henry Brooker (1823-1890)

Close his eyes; his work is done.
What to him is friend or foeman,
Rise of moon or set of sun,
Hand of man or kiss of woman?

Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow.
What cares he, he cannot know.
Lay him low.

As man may, he fought his fight,
Proved his truth by his endeavour:
Let his sleep in solemn night,
Sleep for ever and for ever.

Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow.
What cares he, he cannot know.
Lay him low.

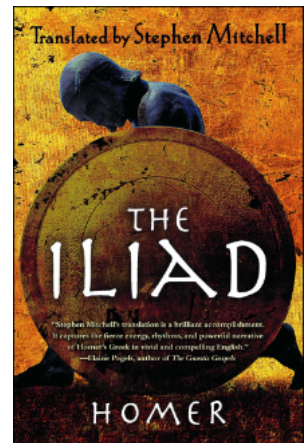
Fold him in his country's stars,
Roll the drums and fire the volley!
What to him are all our wars?
What but death bemoaning folly?

Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow.
What cares he, he cannot know.
Lay him low.

BOOK REVIEW

The ILIAD by Homer (circa 8th Century BC)

This is the most famous poem in Greek Literature portraying in 24 books the 10 years of the Trojan War. Set towards the end of the war the poem depicts significant events in the final weeks of the siege of Troy. In particular it describes a fierce quarrel between King Agamemnon and a celebrated warrior, Achilles. The Iliad is often regarded as the first substantial piece of European literature. It has been translated many times into English, most recently by Emily Wilson in 2023. A gripping read!



EPIGRAMS - all are quotations from Nobel Prize winners.

If you desire peace, cultivate justice, but at the same time, cultivate the fields to produce more bread; otherwise there will be no peace. Norman Borlaug USA . Nobel Peace Prize 1970.

If sunbeams were weapons of war we would have had solar energy centuries ago. George Porter. UK. Nobel Chemistry Prize 1967

No one is free from the history he has inherited. Willy Brandt Germany. Nobel Peace Prize 1971

Household Waste Collection

Apologies for the recent mix up on Tuesday 11 December which should have shown "Rubbish" rather than Recycling.

The schedule going into 2024 has been checked and the collection information is correct for January.

Newsletter Team

Obituary

Condolences to the family and friends of Marlene Aas, of The Stanley, who passed away recently.



Saint Leonard's Church



Churchfield Road
Upton St Leonards
Gloucester
GL4



Website: www.uptonsteonardschurch.co.uk

Services for January 2024

6 th Jan	8.00 am	Holy Communion
	10.00 am	Morning Worship
13 th Jan	10.00 am	Holy Communion
20 th Jan	10.00 am	Holy Communion
27 th Jan	10.00 am	Holy Communion



January 2024

As the New Year begins, we think of our Church building, especially the roof and pray our wonderful community will continue to support

us in our efforts to raise the amount needed for the repairs to begin.

We have so many people to thank for their efforts so far, and we have hope that the future events being organised will be as successful.

On behalf of the PCC and all church members, we wish everyone a very Happy. Healthy and Peaceful New Year.

Jenny Cunningham

Churchwarden: Gill Howell

Interment and burial of ashes enquiries

Email: howzatglos@hotmail.com

**Church Administrator:
Jenny Cunningham**

Wedding & Baptism Enquiries

Sue Downey - Parish Safeguarding Officer

Jeremiah 29: 11

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future"

Gloucester Brass and TLC Singers made a welcome Christmas comeback again in December. Their rendition of Christmas Carols and songs were appreciated by the audience and an amazing total of £900 was made to go towards the roof fund

Very many thanks to everyone concerned



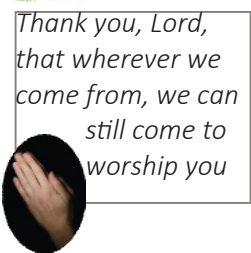
Children's Corner

Following the truth

How far would you travel if you believed you would find Jesus there?

Matthew 2: 1 - 2

A new star appeared in the sky when Jesus was born. Far away in Eastern Lands, wise men, gazing at stars and studying their positions, believed that it meant that a new king had been born to the Jewish people.



Thank you, Lord, that wherever we come from, we can still come to worship you



They packed treasure chests and went to worship him, following the star.

When they arrived in Jerusalem, they went to the palace, expecting to find a baby king there. King Herod came to meet them, wondering what their visit could mean.

'Where is the baby born to be king of the Jews?' they asked, 'We have come to worship him'.

Do we try to make ourselves seem kinder than we really are?

Herod said one thing while he was thinking something quite different.

Matthew 2: 3 - 8

Herod was already king of Judea but he was not a wise or a kind king; he was a cruel and jealous man.



'A baby king?' he thought. 'There is room for only one king here!'

So Herod asked his priests where the prophecies said that the king would be born.

'From Bethlehem' came the answer. King Herod listened to the news with growing anger. But he began to form a plan. He returned to greet his visitors, smiling sweetly.

Let everything I think and say and do be honest and truthful.



Go to Bethlehem.' he told them 'and when you find this special baby, this king of the Jews, please come and tell me so that I can worship him too

Saint Leonard's Church says Thank you

Though so much attention at the moment is focused on the Roof Appeal, we still have to get regular income simply to run the church and its mission and to pay our parish share to the Diocese. Many thanks, therefore, to all who contribute regularly: in the collection, yellow envelopes, by standing order, through the Parish Giving Scheme and the 500 Club. Letters of thanks have gone out to regular givers we know of, but there are other regular donors, e.g. those who put cash in the collection, where we have no record of names. Very many thanks to these, and to all donors.

Andy Russell

2023 was an eventful year for Saint Leonard's church with a lot of effort going into raising money for roof repairs which is so badly needed. We are so grateful to the team of professionals led by Richard Sugdon for taking over the running of the practical side of things leaving the PCC to organise the smaller events.

A huge vote of thanks has to go to Gill Howell who orchestrated the fund raising to start with. She and her team have done an enormous amount of work organising concerts, fetes, flower displays, posh teas and fish and chip suppers. All such enjoyable events that have not only raised money, it has raised the spirits of the community. Everyone has enjoyed the pulling together, for those whose only interest in the church is the beautiful building steeped in history and a centre point for the village, (what a gaping hole it would make if the building wasn't there!) to those who worship there and follow their faith in the calming atmosphere the church provides.

It has been lovely to welcome the children of Upton Saint Leonards Primary school through the doors once again and we hope to see more of them during 2024.

The Open the Book team has resumed visits to the school and even have two pending new members (safeguarding) who will be a welcome addition. We did say a sad goodbye to Mike Stratford who led the team for many years but he decided it was time to hang up his tea towel!

Our thanks go to the community workers who have been working in all weathers in the churchyard and painting the fences and general maintenance, all necessary jobs to keep things looking good.

And last but of course not least we have high hopes that a new vicar will be installed this year and we look forward to welcoming them with open arms. It has been a long time since we said goodbye to Rev Philippa who was with us for 18 months.

More events are in the pipeline for 2024 so 'Watch this space'

Poppy Appeal 2023

On behalf of the Royal British Legion, I would like to say thank you to everyone who helped in any way towards the total of £6305.46p which was raised in Morrison's, plus £368.37p raised locally in the village.

If you would like to be involved in either the Poppy Appeal 2024 or the Shoebox Appeal 2024, please feel free to contact me: Jenny Cunningham

Shoebox Appeal 2023

The total number of shoeboxes collected in Upton Church was 397, thank you so much to everyone who helped in any way. The total number of shoeboxes collected in Gloucestershire was 3535, which is an amazing number of children who will have received a shoebox for the first time.



Rachel Middleton

Tower light dedications

Please note the deadline for the Church pages is the 8th of the preceding month

If you or your family wish to sponsor the lights in celebration of a birthday, an anniversary, for a loved one's life or for any other reason then please contact Jenny Cunningham for more details. Please note that the deadline of the Church News is the 8th of the preceding month.

The Church Tower was lit on the 24th December in loving memory of Reginald William Crawford, husband and father, remembered daily and forever in our hearts. Julia and Barbara.

The Tower Lighting is being sponsored on the 18th January in loving memory of Janet Johnson who passed away six years ago. A much loved Wife, Mother, Grandmother and Great-grandmother. Never forgotten and always in our hearts

On Saturday 20th January 2024, the Church Tower Lights are being sponsored by the family of Ruth Edgington to commemorate one year since she passed away. In loving memory

500 Club Winners for December

First Prize	£30	No. 43
Second Prize	£20	No. 68

At the time of going to print the Christmas 500 club draw had not taken place. Results will be in February edition

Thank you to Tesco for providing 400+ oranges before Christmas to enable a team from church to go into the school and make Christingles with the children.

A busy, somewhat sticky, but very rewarding experience and the children were delighted.

Thanks everyone



Mothers' Union



Upton Mothers' Union met for the last time at Coney Hill in November for a "Members' Afternoon" and was well attended. Everyone brought along a poem or reading with an Autumn or Advent theme and there was an amazing mixture of the humorous and the sacred plus a bit of Betjeman and even one generated by AI. They then attempted an "Autumn" quiz and Margaret Bishop showed her excellent knowledge of historical facts and dates to win the prize of biscuits (not any biscuits but M&S biscuits!) Judy Jackson had made a beautiful Christmas candlestick arrangement as one of the raffle prizes which was won by Rachel Hall.

From the beginning of 2024 Mothers' Union will be holding their meetings in the Old School Room, Upton on the third Thursday of each month. The

next meeting will be held on 18 January at 2pm. Please note the earlier time.

Our speaker will be our Diocesan President, Doreen McLellan, and it is important that all members try to attend as she will be explaining the possible changes to be made to the structure and governance of Mothers' Union. It will be followed by New Year Nibbles. Mothers' Union is open to anyone who is baptised, whether a mother or not and of either gender so please do come along and join us in Faith, Fun and Fellowship. We can promise a warm welcome and have a variety of speakers booked for 2024.

Kate Gale

Branch Leader

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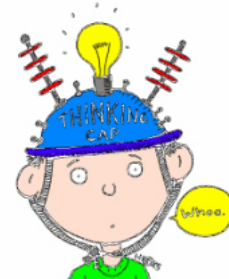
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New Year Quiz to Test The Brain



This was part of the 'quiz' at last November's Fish and Chip supper.

There is an overall theme, and each group has its own theme.

What is listed here are definition clues, such as you find for a quick crossword.

What are the answers?

Group 1

- A Nonsense
- B The final section of a piece of music
- C A Menswear item of the 15th and 16th century
- D An Old man
- E An analgesic
- F An appendix to a will
- G An oily dietary supplement rich in vitamins A and D
- H One form of encryption

Group 2

- A A carpenter's nickname
- B In an eponymous novel, made into a film, a long serving schoolmaster
- C Used in a casino
- D Cowboy leggings
- E Pork or lamb cutlets
- F Blokes
- G The great pyramid
- H Tiny electronic circuits

Group 3

- A A port in Wales
- B Effective with least waste
- C Dressed snappily, rakish
- D Lacking
- E Suspicious
- F Archbishop of Canterbury who crowned Elizabeth II
- G An appointed person, e.g. from the Council
- H A method of scamming

Group 4

- A A sailor
- B A Cornish resort
- C An attack
- D Capital of Utah
- E Lot's wife
- F Diagonal cross on a shield
- G Mineral forming the Giant's Causeway
- H Gymnastic move

Message from Chrissie Castle, Chair of USL Parish Council

I would like to wish all parishioners a Happy New Year 2024 and just update you on a couple of notices:

As you know, we meet as a Parish Council on the first Monday of every month and all parishioners are welcome to attend. Minutes of the meetings are on the parish website. In May 2024 there will be parish council elections and there are 10 councillor seats in our parish for election. New blood is always needed with new ideas to take our Parish forward and no previous experience is needed. We have a very capable Clerk, Roy Balgobin, and his assistant Tracy Slator who help manage parish matters. More information will be given nearer the time about what it involves and how to apply.

On another note, Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) have had a share of extra funding for road repairs and we ask them regularly to repair the never ending formation of pot holes in our locality. There is an app 'Fix My Street' which can be found on their website or can be downloaded from Apple's App Store or Google Play. GCC aim to repair all significant potholes (more than 4cms deep and 30cms wide) within 28 days of receiving a report. We have reported to GCC the state of the roads such as Portway and Nuthill, so the more we all pressure them the better the chance we may finally get the promised works completed.

The Parish Council would like to thank all those volunteers in the village who do so much for our Parish to make it such a lovely community to be part of and live in.

Information

Upton Climate Group

Calling all Land Owners in Upton

A group called the Stroud Valleys Project (established in 1988) works to support communities and volunteers working on local projects that will look after their environments and nature.

They are currently looking for anyone with a minimum of one to two hectares of land where they would come in, prepare and plant trees and help maintain them at no cost to the land owner. They are also offering to help lay hedges which may be of use to land owners but also support local biodiversity eg creating food, shelter and wildlife corridors.

**If anyone is interested in taking up this free offer of help, please contact
clare@stroudvalleysproject.org**

Fly Tipping - what to do if you see it?

Go onto the Stroud District Council Site (www.stroud.gov.uk) and the easy way to find the right page is to put fly tipping in the search box in the top right hand part of the home screen.

If you see anyone in the act of fly tipping, and you are able, take a note of any details including vehicle registration which can be passed on when you complete the details you will see on the website.

This has been done by village residents in the past and some people have been prosecuted as a result.

Help Keep Upton Tidy!



Parish Council Report

1. Parish Council Meetings

There will be no meeting in January so if any members of the public plan to attend the next meeting, it will be held on Monday 5 February 2024 at 7.30pm, **Chrissie Castle, Chair, USL Parish Council**

2. Dogs on The Recreation Ground

People are still being seen exercising their dogs off the lead on the recreation ground. Although we believe that these may be from outside of the village, can we just repeat the request to keep dogs on leads to protect the sports field from potential damage.

INDOOR CRICKET

The cricket season used to be limited to April-September. Not now. It is played indoors, and it might surprise you to know that most cricket clubs in the area field an adult indoor team through the winter. Upton has done so (but not at the moment; the Village club has indoor training, but not matches, in the winter.)

Indoor cricket is played in sports halls. Locally we have used Gloucester Academy, St Peter's, Gloucester Uni, Hartpury Uni, and currently the Gloucester area games are being played at the King's School. There are many versions of the game played indoors, hard ball, soft ball, etc. Here we play with a hard ball, 6-a-side, 10 overs per innings. The game is very fast and exciting. A 10-over innings game lasts under 1 hour. There are, of course, special rules for indoor games (e.g. the ball stays in play after bouncing from a wall or roof), but the basics of cricket are all present.

Usually, because the game is so fast paced and the skill standard is generally high, it needs a qualified and experienced umpire and scorer to officiate at the match. I am qualified both as an umpire and a scorer, so get called upon most weeks, helping at two or three games per evening.

One difficulty is the cost. The sports hall might cost £60 per hour, the ball probably £10, and the umpire and scorer get £10 each per game. So that's maybe £80-90 per game, which the participating clubs or players have to find.

If you are interested in seeing this happening, contact me and I can let you know when the games are.

You can watch from a viewing area, safely out of reach of whizzing hard cricket balls!



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JANUARY

1	Mon	New Year's Day		
1	Mon	Coffee Club	BMI	10.00a.m.
2	Tue	Recycling and food waste week		
2	Tue	Needles & Pins	Village Hall Annex	9.45a.m.
2	Tue	Badminton	Village Hall	8.00-10.00p.m.
3	Wed	Wednesday Probus	BMI	10.00a.m.
3	Wed	Upstagers Amateur Dramatics	Village Hall	8.00p.m.
3	Wed	Bell Ringing Practice	Church	7.30p.m.
3	Wed	Bingo	BMI	8.00p.m.
6	Sat	Post Christmas/New Year Quiz	BMI	8.00p.m.
7	Sun	Tennis Club Members Morning	Tennis Courts	10.00a.m.
8	Mon	Coffee Club	BMI	10.00a.m.
8	Mon	Twyver WI	Village Hall	7.30p.m.
8	Mon	Parish Council Meeting	Pavilion	7.30p.m.
9	Tue	Rubbish and food waste week		
9	Tue	Needles & Pins	Village Hall Annex	9.45a.m.
9	Tue	Tuesday Probus	BMI	10.00a.m.
9	Tue	Badminton	Village Hall	8.00-10.00p.m.
10	Wed	Copy date for February issue of USL Life		
10	Wed	Upstagers Amateur Dramatics	Village Hall	7.30p.m.
10	Wed	Bell Ringing Practice	Church	7.30p.m.
10	Wed	Bingo	BMI	8.00p.m.
14	Sun	Comedy Night	BMI	8.00p.m.
14	Sun	Tennis Club Members Morning	Tennis Courts	10.00a.m.
15	Mon	Coffee Club	BMI	10.00a.m.
15	Mon	Abbeyle Garden Club	Village Hall	7.30-9.30p.m.
16	Tue	Recycling and food Waste week		
16	Tue	Needles & Pins	Village Hall Annex	9.45a.m.
16	Tue	Badminton	Village Hall	8.00-10.00p.m.
17	Wed	Wednesday Probus	BMI	10.00a.m.
17	Wed	Upstagers Amateur Dramatics	Village Hall	7.30p.m.
17	Wed	Bingo	BMI	8.00p.m.
17	Wed	Bell Ringing Practice	Church	7.30p.m.
18	Thu	History Group – "Dyer Edwards" by Richard Wyatt	Village Hall	7.45-9.15p.m.
20	Sat	Entertainment Night	BMI	8.00p.m.
21	Sun	Tennis Club Members Morning	Tennis Courts	10.00a.m.
21	Sun	Sunday lunchtime Jazz	BMI	1.00-3.30p.m.
22	Mon	Coffee Club	BMI	10.00a.m.
23	Tue	Rubbish and food waste week		
23	Tue	Needles & Pins	Village Hall Annex	9.45a.m.
23	Tue	Tuesday Probus	BMI	10.00a.m.
23	Tue	Badminton	Village Hall	8.00-10.00p.m.
24	Wed	Ladies Probus	BMI	10.00a.m.
24	Wed	Upstagers Amateur Dramatics	Village Hall	7.30p.m.
24	Wed	Bingo	BMI	8.00p.m.
25	Thu	Craft Club	The Old School Room	10.00-12.00p.m.
28	Sun	Tennis Club Members Morning	Tennis Courts	10.00a.m.
29	Mon	Coffee Club	BMI	10.00a.m.
30	Tue	Recycling and food waste week		
30	Tue	Needles and Pins	Village Hall Annex	9.45a.m.
30	Tue	Badminton	Village Hall	8.00-10.00p.m.
31	Wed	Wednesday Probus	BMI	10.00a.m.
31	Wed	Upstagers Amateur Dramatics	Village Hall	7.30p.m.
31	Wed	Bingo	BMI	8.00p.m.
31	Wed	Bell Ringing Practice	Church	7.30p.m.

FEBRUARY

5	Mon	Upton WI	Pavilion	2.00p.m.
5	Mon	Parish Council Meeting	Pavilion	7.30p.m.
10	Sat	Copy date for March issue of USL Life		
12	Mon	Twyver WI	Village Hall	7.30p.m.

15	Thu	Upstagers Comedy Play	Village Hall	7.30p.m.
16	Fri	Upstagers Comedy Play	Village Hall	7.30p.m.
17	Sat	Upstagers Comedy Play	Village Hall	7.30p.m.
17	Sat	Entertainment Night	BMI	8.00p.m.
19	Mon	Abbeydale Garden Club	Village Hall	7.30-9.30p.m.
21	Wed	Ladies Probus	BMI	10.00a.m.
24	Sat	Fun Horse Racing Night	BMI	8.00p.m.
29	Thu	Craft Club	The Old School Room	10.00-12.00p.m.

MARCH

4	Mon	Upton WI	Pavilion	2.00p.m.
5	Mon	Parish Council Meeting	Pavilion	7.30p.m.
9	Sat	Entertainment Night	BMI	8.00p.m.
10	Sun	Copy date for April issue of USL Life		
11	Mon	Twyver WI	Village Hall	
17	Sun	Sunday lunchtime Jazz	BMI	1.00-3.30p.m.
18	Mon	Abbeydale Garden Club	Village Hall	7.30-9.30p.m.
21	Thu	History Group – Inns & Traffic in the Coaching Age	Village Hall	7.45-9.15p.m.
23	Sat	Spring Quiz	BMI	8.00p.m.
27	Wed	Ladies Probus	BMI	10.00a.m.
28	Thu	Craft Club	The Old School Room	10.00-12.00p.m.
29	Fri	Good Friday		
31	Sun	Easter Sunday		

Contact Paula Quinn to have an event mentioned in the diary

Weekly courses

This section lists the courses that run every week.

Activity	Day	Venue	Contact	
Yoga	Mondays 10am	Village Hall Annex	Lara Bricknell	07876 764425
Pilates with Sam	Fridays 9.30am	Village Hall Annex	Sam Slatter	07894 757360
Chair-based Pilates	Wednesdays 1.30pm	Pavilion	Angela Harris	
Dance Workout	Tuesdays 7pm	Pavilion	Debra Law	07505 761420
Seniors Fitness	Thursdays 10am	Pavilion	Deb Locke	07738 104404
Tai Chi	Thursdays 10am	Village Hall Annex	Christina Caldwell	
Art Class	Tuesdays 2pm	Village Hall Annex	Christine Hughes	01452 614227

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Personal Thoughts from a village resident - The Messenger

"I hear you dad. I understand. Together again? Thank you for your visit"

The woods are glorious today. It's cold. Crunchy under foot and the leaves glow in radiant frosted shades of golds, russets and ambers in the pristine winter sunshine.

Breath is ripped from my lungs in gasps, by the sheer beauty of the scene. The diluted watery sun ripples through the naked trees, the merest brush on my face of a gentle breeze, as if someone very close is whispering in my ear.

I follow the well trodden path that trails down to the lower wood. The robin flies ahead of me once again. He is waiting for me at the head of the path, perched on a low branch, observing every approaching step - waiting to chat perhaps. I smile. If only I think.....

I stop in my tracks, beneath him, looking up. We are so close I could reach out and touch him. He's so brave, so bold. He shows no fear. His message is frantic, the chatter coming persistently. Whatever he is trying to tell me must be important as he is so determined that I should understand. I talk to him asking him what it is that I must know. He repeats himself over and over. I intuitively know that it is linked to my beloved Dad, the feeling is so powerful - but is it up to me to interpret?

"I hear you Dad. Is it you, here with me now? What is your message?"

Smiling at my beautiful feathered friend, I continue to walk on along my chosen route. The robin flies on with me. Clipping my shoulder, he hovers just yards ahead of me, then lands on an overhanging branch in the nearest tree. As he bars my way, I have to stop again to allow this little creature to launch his next urgent tirade at me.

"What is it? What do I need to know that is so important? Help me to understand - I am trying. Come on then little one, off we go again - I'll walk, you fly"

We continue with this same routine several more times. Suddenly the penny drops into my mind and I think I've got the message. I stagger a little and tears well up to mist over my eyes and fall in rivulets. As I rapidly blink, licking the saltiness on my lips, the robin stops chattering and lists his tiny head to one side - just waiting

"Of course, now I get it. You're not gone at all dad are you? You're here with me now, looking out for me, keeping me company, keeping me safe. Thank you for sending the robin. I know it is you. This means the world to me and I know beyond all doubt that you will always be watching over me. I love you too Dad".

Having fulfilled his duty, my precious feathered messenger flapped his delicate wings, hovered in front of me for several more seconds, then off he went, dancing in the air up and down and from side to side. Mission accomplished - he knew.

With an added spring in my steps, tears of joy rolling down my icy face and the broadest smile ever, I make my way back to the edge of the woods towards the road. My heart is bursting with happiness and gratitude.

I am utterly at peaceBless you

UPTON ST LEONARDS LIFE

Web site <https://usllife.org.uk>

To contact us, use the website above or the postbox by the Village Hall main door, or use the contact details that appear below:

This month's editor: Peter Wilson
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Diary: Paula Quinn

Advertising: Contact: Andy Russell

Admin Support: Janine Black

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Next month's editor - Barbara



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Raise the Roof

The Church Roof Fund

Are these our youngest fund raisers to date?



These two young people (Henry on left and Atticus on the right) made some toys for Halloween and have donated the proceeds to our Church Roof Fund.

Well done to them and thank you for your efforts



Christmas Songs and Carols Concert



BMI Pensioners Lunch - 9 December



The BMI pensioners lunch took place on Saturday 9th December. This is one of the most anticipated events in the BMI calendar. Eighty pensioners were treated to a three course Christmas lunch followed by coffee and mince pies.

The committee and helpers welcomed the guests with a complimentary drink of their choice. Also included on the day was wine with the meal and a raffle.