



**DOWNLEY  
COMMUNITY**

SPRING/SUMMER/AUTUMN/WINTER

# Village News

Issue 123/May 2020



**Join in  
'Grow a Sunflower for Downley'**  
See page 14



**Scarecrow Selfies  
For Up! Downley 2020**  
See pages 14 & 15



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## Editorial

Welcome to our special “lockdown” edition of Downley Village News! We are all having to adapt to what may well become a “new normal” in terms of social distancing, which means that unfortunately this issue will not be distributed to all households as usual. We will be distributing to some of our most vulnerable residents, and hope to have copies available in local shops so you can pick a copy up with your shopping, and I hope that many of you are reading this online via our website.

It would be a shame if the issue is not seen by the wider community, as it contains so many examples of the great community spirit on display in our village during these difficult times, and the positivity of our fellow villagers. In particular, I would point you to the many quotations from local residents which appear throughout the magazine, highlighting some of the positives to come out of this crisis.

We will be back with another edition of Downley Village News in a few months' time, and, as always, will be delighted to hear from any organisation in Downley (or the surrounding area) with news and information. You can submit articles via the email address [editor@downley.org](mailto:editor@downley.org) (copy deadline 31 July). Hopefully we will be back to a full distribution list by then, but of course we will need to abide by whatever Government restrictions are in place at that time.

*Anne, Editor • [editor@downley.org](mailto:editor@downley.org)*



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# DPC Covid-19 Action Group



In early March, a small group based on the Downley Resilience Committee met to discuss the possible implications of the threatening Covid-19 outbreak and how the Parish Council (DPC) should respond in the event of restrictions of movement.

The DPC Covid-19 Action Group (DCAG) was set up to coordinate communications and activities in the village. Each street has a street representative (“street rep”) to handle communications between DCAG and their local residents. Street reps also recruit their own local volunteers to assist vulnerable or self-isolating households with shopping, collecting prescriptions, walking the dog or just a friendly chat. In many cases a local WhatsApp or Facebook group has been set up to allow those that can to join in. Where residents are not online then street reps can post leaflets through the letterbox to keep people in touch.

Every street now has a street rep and contact emails are available on [www.downley.org](http://www.downley.org), on noticeboards and shop windows throughout the village. A central phone number is also available (01494 528133) which is manned 8am to 8pm for those not online but please contact your street rep in the first instance.

DCAG also assists with food deliveries from the Co-op grocery store and Starlight Stores’ VegBox delivery system and also collects medicines from the Downley Pharmacy. In addition, a Downley Disraeli Food Bank has been set up for those in need. Contact your street rep for more details.

Deliverers are being supplied with face masks from a team of “Downley Makers” who are converting unwanted sheets and pillowcases into reusable facemasks for when they approach households with a delivery. This provides much-needed reassurance to at-risk occupants.

Contact has been made with the Bucks Council High Wycombe Hub who have designated DCAG as the primary support organisation for Downley and routes all requests for assistance through them. The local police are also liaising closely with DCAG where required. Members of DCAG have assisted in setting up a similar group in Disraeli.

DCAG is comprised of the following members, supported by other villagers as and when required.

- Moyra Lazenby *Downley Parish Councillor*
- David Worsdall *Resilience Committee and DOSCA*
- Sarah Bass *Downley Village News Distribution*
- Bill Thompson *Communications Forum*
- Chettina Fenech *Clerk to DPC*
- Mike Dean *Former DDJFC Coach*
- Vaib Naik *Ford Way Street Rep*

**Contact should be made via [info@downley.org](mailto:info@downley.org) or 01494 528133**

**See our video at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=6x11LydilirY&feature=share](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6x11LydilirY&feature=share)**

**FOR THOSE IN NEED IN OTHER AREAS OF HIGH WYCOMBE  
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Local organising to support the most vulnerable in our communities

**Hi there, neighbour!** Are you unable to leave your home because of Covid-19/Coronavirus? We are here for you.



**Who are we?**

We are a group of local **High Wycombe** residents who have come together during a time where some people are finding it hard to access the help they need.

We would like to support the community that we live in and ensure that nobody is left isolated or without support. We don't ask for anything in return, we just believe in helping each other in a time of difficulty.



We are your local neighbours and **not a professional body**. We can only offer help within reason, and in ways we can also stay safe. **If you need medical advice, use the NHS 111 online coronavirus service at 111.nhs.uk/covid-19**, or if you have no internet access, call NHS 111 from your phone. In a medical emergency, dial 999.

**NEED SUPPORT?**

If you would like to speak to us, or want to ask for help, please call us on **01494 911229** and let's see how we can help. Alternatively, you can find us on Facebook on [facebook.com/groups/HighWycombeMutualAid](https://www.facebook.com/groups/HighWycombeMutualAid) or through our website: [wycombe-mutual-aid.org](http://wycombe-mutual-aid.org)

**GIVE SUPPORT**

If you would like to support the community and join in, please get in touch on [facebook.com/groups/HighWycombeMutualAid](https://www.facebook.com/groups/HighWycombeMutualAid) or through our website: [wycombe-mutual-aid.org](http://wycombe-mutual-aid.org)

**EXAMPLES OF HOW WE CAN HELP:**



On the back of this leaflet is some advice to help keep you safe. →

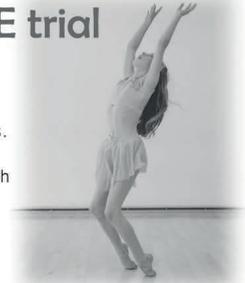


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# Downley community starts local food bank

Thanks to the incredible generosity of Downley residents, a temporary food bank has been set up, based at The Pastures Church.



Melanie Smith, organiser, said; 'I'm delighted to have been able to start this initiative, which was created when it became apparent that the residents of Downley desperately wanted to help their own and the neighbouring community of Disraeli by donating food and other essentials. I would specifically like to thank the Street Reps of Downley without whom the project would not have been able to run.'

So far the Food Bank - run by Melanie, Ant Lee (Pastor at the Pastures Church), Khalil Ahmed (Bucks Councillor for Disraeli) and Trevor Snaith - has delivered 27 food parcels, many of which were for families, and we estimate this has relived the pressure for approximately 50 people. Donations are collected weekly and picked and packed into parcels upon request.

The food bank can help individuals and families (and their pets!) in Downley and Disraeli, without judgement. Donations are welcome as are requests for food. Just contact [DisraeliHelp@gmail.com](mailto:DisraeliHelp@gmail.com) and a member of the team will be pleased to help.

## Volunteer Drivers

Hi Downley! Matt and Libby here....

We have been recruited as Downley Covid-19 Action Group's volunteer delivery drivers, operating in Downley and Disraeli. Our primary focus is delivering shopping to our vulnerable and elderly residents from the Co-op. On top of this we also deliver medication from Downley Pharmacy as local Pharmacy Reps and, more recently, the 'veg boxes' from Starlight Stores.

4 weeks ago we were both busy students in our third and final years at university, studying Technical Theatre. Once lockdown commenced, not only did our last term of teaching get cancelled, but also our greatly anticipated graduation ceremonies. With nothing left to do, we put our names forward, offering to help in any way possible.

For at least a few hours every day you will find us driving around the local area, usually discovering roads we didn't even know existed! Libby drives and organises the routes, whilst Matt hefts the often heavy shopping from car to doorstep. We have a Ford Fiesta blazoned with a bright orange stripe, which can hold shopping for up to 5 households at a time. If you see us driving around, please give us a wave!

**ps: See our photo on the back cover!**

"We have been wasting less food - the panic at the start of this really made us think about using leftovers carefully, as well as how fortunate we are."

---

# Downley Day and Concert on the Common 2020

## *A Response to Covid-19*

Like many other events, the plans for Downley Day 2020 have been thrown into doubt and uncertainty. Up to now, June has seemed a long time away but it has now become clear that going ahead on 20 June is no longer feasible, so we have reluctantly decided to postpone both Downley Day and Concert on the Common. The current plan is to attempt to run these as a combined event on 19 September, so long as Government restrictions on large gatherings have been lifted by then. The timings on the day have yet to be firmed up but Downley Day would probably start and finish a little earlier and Concert on the Common would run until early evening. The family disco would be run as usual on the evening of 18 September.

If restrictions are still in place then the events will have to be cancelled and will be held in 2021 on 19 June 2021 (Downley Day) and 10 July (Concert on the Common).

So let's keep our fingers crossed and hope that we can celebrate some relief from lockdown with a big party on 19 September. Updates will be on the Downley website (<https://www.downley.org/home>) and in the next edition of Downley Village News.

*Bill Thompson, Downley Day Committee.*

## Coffee Stop (non) News



What very strange times we are living through. Even before the official lockdown we decided to close the Coffee Stop as most of our customers and ourselves are in the vulnerable group. As I now live out of the Downley area and am not allowed out of our site at Hughenden Gardens I have to keep up with events second hand, but reading the Downley website it seems that heroic efforts are being made by everyone to support those who are self-isolating; it makes one really proud of our community.

The creativity and ingenuity of people is really impressive, and it is fascinating to read blogs and find out how people are occupying their time. There are so many ways to communicate these days that it can be a bit overwhelming, but it is also a good way to discover new skills. There are so many things to see, such as museum tours and gardens showing their splendour online – have a look at Kew Gardens via google, there are “walks” around several different areas. I have also been enjoying taking part in online quizzes.

The “clap for carers” on a Thursday evening has been very moving as we are all out on our balconies and we can hear the applause echoing around the Hughenden Valley. To all the key workers, not just the NHS, but the other carers, refuse collectors, bus drivers, delivery men and supermarket workers we offer our heartfelt admiration and thanks.

I hope you are all staying safe and happy, every day seems the same and nothing happens; these memories will be history one day. Until we meet again, I send my very best wishes.

*Ann Buxton*

# Downley's Coronavirus Friendship Tree

My name is Michelle Read and I am the Street Rep on Commonsides in Downley. We started the friendship tree (*see front and back cover photos*) on the common because we wanted to create something that pulls our village together and also hopefully make passers-by smile during this difficult time.

A friend of mine had made a bunch of rainbows and hung them on a tree in her neighbourhood for the children passing to take one home. I loved this idea, but we wanted to get everyone else creatively involved too and have all the designs staying on the tree.

So myself, my son Joshua (5) and my boyfriend Jamie made a load of Hama bead designs, mainly rainbows, to decorate the tree to get it started, and asked anyone who wants to go home and make something of their own, to help share the love and grow the friendship tree. It was our little way of letting our friends, neighbours and community know that we may not be able to see our friends right now but we were thinking of everyone, and getting everyone creative!

## Our message is:

"If you are feeling sad or lonely when passing underneath the beeches, hopefully this tree will make you realise you are not alone, but in fact part of a team of superheroes, saving the world in a small but very important way.

Friends are like rainbows - you don't always see them, but you know they are always there."

The tree has had so many decorations added to it, we absolutely love seeing everyone's creative ideas!! Sometimes we sit by the window and watch children and adults add to it, and we have witnessed hundreds of smiles, which was the main aim.

Lots of people have asked what will happen to it... I think we will leave it up as long as possible, till the weather changes, as I don't want everyone's amazing creations to get ruined! I thought about boxing it all up and burying it in the ground by the tree, so we know all those memories will always be together and by our special Downley friendship tree, or maybe talk to Downley School to see if they want to display the designs. Nothing has been decided yet and we are open to suggestions!

## Bucks Relationship Counselling

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[www.bucksrelationshipcounselling.co.uk](http://www.bucksrelationshipcounselling.co.uk)

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**Include the street name and the nearest house number, lights cannot be reported without this information.**



"Have been exploring the footpaths around Downley; I've seen more in the last six weeks than in the rest of the time since I moved here."

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# Downley Common News

We live in strange and uncertain times! How many times have I heard that over the last couple of months – possibly more times than I've had hot dinners.

Still, things have changed on the Common. I don't think I've seen so many people going for walks and having picnics and sunbathing and just generally taking any excuse to get out of the house, whether they're allowed to or not. Still, most people are being sensible and keeping some degree of distance around them. Some of the paths in the woods are more difficult as they are quite narrow and keeping 2m away from others can be a challenge, particularly along the bridlepath at the north end that leads to Naphill. DCPS is thinking of laying some tape along each side of the path to indicate a 2m separation, together with large round markers, 2m apart all the way along with perhaps some more passing places for cycles and horses. Once you get past Cookshall Lane you can do what you like – that's Naphill's problem!

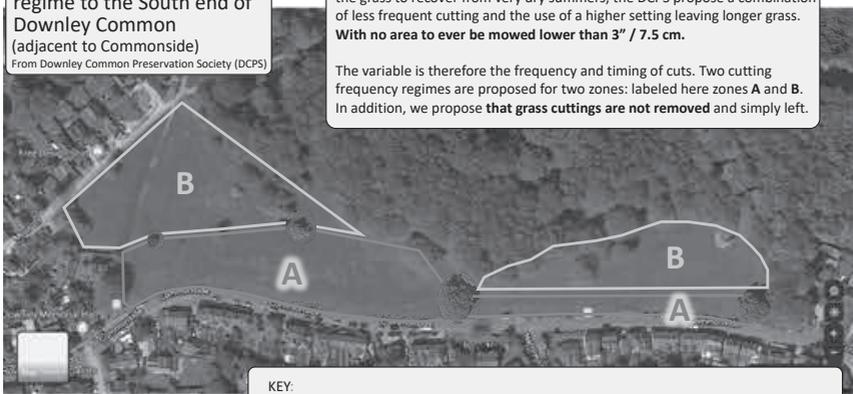
As you can imagine, not much work is happening on the Common right now and the number of fresh saplings growing up in the open grassland areas seems to be increasing. This will be an urgent job for whenever we are allowed to have work parties again.

You will also start to notice a new mowing regime taking effect on Commonside. The current mowing schedule is thought to be too frequent, such that the grass is struggling to survive in some areas. This will be changed by separating the area next to Commonside currently used for walking and games (typically closer to the road) which will be cut every 8 weeks or so. The remaining areas closer to the woods and to Moor Lane will be cut just once a year shortly before Downley Day (in a normal year). Dog walkers are reminded to ensure any dog poo is removed, particularly from areas with longer grass where it is less easy to see.

Proposal for new mowing regime to the South end of Downley Common (adjacent to Commonside)  
From Downley Common Preservation Society (DCPS)

In the interests of sustainability (fuel reduction) and biodiversity, and to allow the grass to recover from very dry summers, the DCPS propose a combination of less frequent cutting and the use of a higher setting leaving longer grass.  
**With no area to ever be mowed lower than 3" / 7.5 cm.**

The variable is therefore the frequency and timing of cuts. Two cutting frequency regimes are proposed for two zones: labeled here zones A and B. In addition, we propose that grass cuttings are not removed and simply left.



KEY:

A = Regular cutting every 8 weeks or so over an 8 month 'season' March-October. Left to grow outside that season.

B = 1 cut only per year, carried out a short time before Downley Day.

January 2020

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# Downley Community Centre

The Community Centre has been closed since 16th March.

As a consequence neither the AGM nor the management meeting scheduled in March took place. Since then we have been able to meet using Zoom, and to help others in the current climate Downley Community Centre agreed to make immediate donations of £500 each to two local charities, Wycombe Homeless Connection and One Can Trust.

We also offered to make the building available to Government at both county and national level in any capacity and are standing by in case we are needed.



## Downley Brownies

Before the Covid-19 lockdown, 21 girls in 1st Downley Brownies made a “penguin huddle”

At Brownies they like to make things and recycling plastic bottles not only helps the environment but keeps the cost down!

We hope the other users of the centre enjoy them as much as they obviously did making them.



*They are busy now guarding the carpark.*

---

Many regular hirers have experimented with virtual meetings. These are some of their experiences:

**1) A Sense of Balance** - Emma is teaching all her classes online.

Timetable available at: [www.asenseofbalance.co.uk](http://www.asenseofbalance.co.uk)

Emma is happy to welcome newcomers so long as they have practised Pilates/ Yoga before. Emma is offering discounts to those struggling financially due to the pandemic. To access this, applications need to be made in confidence via email.

[emma@asenseofbalance.co.uk](mailto:emma@asenseofbalance.co.uk)

**2) Chris Jeffries** - personal counsellor, reports that the lockdown was the opportunity to offer his relationship counselling services online to both existing and new clients. Some people do have their own good reasons for not going online, which he respects; however, he has found that many people find that it worked well - be it telephone, Skype, FaceTime, Zoom or Houseparty.

‘It’s different to actual face to face, however it works really well - especially when a cat/small child unexpectedly walks across in front of the camera’.

- 
- 3) **Alzheimer's Society** - The Memory Support Service team at Alzheimer's Society are still there to support people with dementia, people with memory concerns and carers by telephone, email or Skype. Please ring 01296 331749 and leave a message and your call will be returned as soon as possible (the messages are checked several times daily). Alternatively, you can email the team at [bucks.memorysupport@nhs.net](mailto:bucks.memorysupport@nhs.net). They cannot offer personalised medical advice but will direct you towards other reliable sources and will stay in touch with all service users who will be contacted by telephone in future weeks.

### **Emergency appeal: Please donate**

People affected by dementia are reaching out to us every day. The coming months are set to be tough, and coronavirus will hit people affected by dementia the hardest. We simply cannot let people with dementia and their carers face this alone.

**Text UNITE to 70660 to give £10**

- 4) **Spectrum Coaching** - Rosi has kept in touch with her ladies who are keen to resume bouncing. There are currently bookable 1 to 1 ReboundFit sessions online for those who have rebounders at home. Rosi is currently working with one client online for live ReboundFit Bounce back weekly at ReboundFit Home.

This is an even more important time to make sure we can ReboundFit and we have a much needed fun bounce back session to music at the end of the week (Friday Mornings) where we do Nothing But the Bounce. This is followed by a short discussion about how we are coping and adapting. [spectrumcoaching@outlook.com](mailto:spectrumcoaching@outlook.com)

- 5) **Come Dancing With Me** - At the time of going to press, Karen is trying to get a Zoom group class together for private lessons individuals and couples, but it's not as easy as it might seem. Karen needs a space larger than her front room even for the latin dances and getting folk organised has proven hard work. Hopefully by the time you read this the first trials will have been successful based on a couple of sessions but limited to about 30 minutes. If nothing else the trials will be accepted as more of a social event exercise. *More details at: [www.comedancingwithme.co.uk](http://www.comedancingwithme.co.uk)*

- 6) **Pilates** - No actual pilates – tricky to do on Zoom – but the group organised a few Zoom tai chi coffee mornings, though not doing any tai chi, just keeping in touch with a cup of coffee in front of a screen and chatting – nice to see one another. Unfortunately Sue had a serious fall on a pavement a few weeks ago is only now just beginning to get better. Get well soon Sue!

**We thank all our users for their support and rest assured  
we will be open for business again just as soon as we are allowed  
Downley Community Centre Management Committee**

# Up! Downley Festival 2020

## Dear Friends of Downley

*We want to start by saying we hope you are doing your best to stay safe and healthy and it is wonderful to see the community reaching out to each other across our lovely village. It's something we should all be proud of.*

We are sure this won't come as much of a surprise, but we are sorry to share the news that we have had to take the decision to cancel the Up! Downley Festival in its usual format.

We will, however, be running a mini virtual festival for the following activities; the scarecrow festival, art show, open gardens and 'grow a sunflower for Downley'. Below are details and full entry details are at the end of this article.

We are also hopeful we may be able to run a form of Downley Day / Community event later in the year when restrictions are lifted but only when it feels right. We are sure that you, our friends and neighbours, understand why this has to happen. Please continue to keep looking out for each other, keep safe, share good ideas and be the great village community we all love!

### Scarecrow Selfies

You've guessed it, its scarecrow season again and this year we need your help to make it bigger and better than ever!

Each year, we see so many spectacular scarecrows and we know that this year you can do it again.

For those of you new to Downley or have not had a chance to get creative in the past, now is your time to shine! We know that not everyone has room outside for a scarecrow but we would love to see drawings, collages or even a small scarecrow at your window!

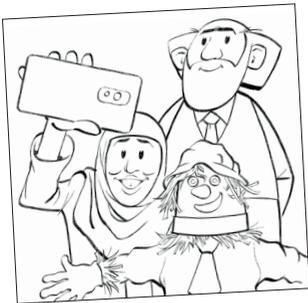
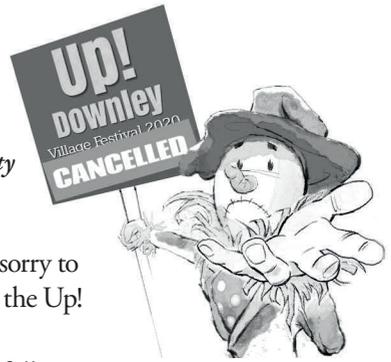
Use your imagination and feel free to think outside

the box! Perhaps dress up yourself as a scarecrow!

We would love you to send us your scarecrow selfies so that they can be displayed on our website. I am sure you can imagine, not all of our residents will be out and about to see your creations and we don't want them to miss out. Have fun and we look forward to seeing your finished characters in June.

### 'Grow a Sunflower for Downley'

This is not a competition but we are urging everyone who can to plant sunflowers in their front garden. **Why? Just because we are Downley!** If you can't/don't want to grow an actual plant then a drawing or painting in your window would be lovely. The Festival Committee will purchase some seeds for those who can't get any, on a first come first served basis (you may have some in bird feed) **email [chettina@downleyparishcouncil.org](mailto:chettina@downleyparishcouncil.org)** if you would like some seeds.



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## Art Show

The 'show will go on', albeit a virtual one, complete with an online Gallery at [downley.org](http://downley.org). After all, the urge to be creative is always there and with so many activities currently denied to us, expressing yourself artistically need not be one of them.



There will be no formal judging or media categories, just a public vote, as all the work will be in the form of photographs. Still express yourself in your favourite medium whether 2D, 3D or poetry and then photograph your work (max of 3 pieces). We will ask visitors to the online Gallery to pick their five favourite pieces from both Junior and Adult artists and to leave comments. There are no themes, but doubtless these times will suggest some of their own.

The complete Gallery of work will be online from 29 June at [downley.org](http://downley.org)

To make the most of photographing your work you might like to visit <https://www.photoshop.com/en/tools/editor> where you will find Photoshop Express which is free to use. You will need Adobe Flash Player enabled.

## Open Gardens

If you are lucky enough to have a garden, you might be feeling particularly grateful at the moment. Our gardens are a place where we can relax, escape, be creative, exercise and provide a great place for our children to play.

For many people the garden has been a welcome distraction while they can't work, and for those still working long hours, somewhere to lose yourself when you have a moment or two.

It seems a shame to miss an opportunity to share the favourite bits of our gardens with everyone else in Downley, so take a maximum of three photos of your garden and submit them online as below. This isn't a 'gardening' competition at all – just an opportunity to share some images of your own spaces and maybe get some good ideas from others.

We're really excited to see your photos! Up until now we can only imagine what's in those back gardens, so let's flood the website with some inspiring photos - Thank you!

## **The Entry Details to take part in any or all of the Up! Festivals' virtual events**

### *Online*

- All photos need to be uploaded in a jpeg format with a maximum file size of 1MB at: [www.downley.org/community/up-downley-village-festival](http://www.downley.org/community/up-downley-village-festival)
- Select and fill out the appropriate entry form

### *By Post*

- Collect an entry form from Starlight Stores and fill out the appropriate section/s
- All photos need to be no bigger than A4 and labelled on the back with the applicable event
- Post photos and form to Downley Community Centre, School Close, Downley, HP13 5TR or to 22 Plomer Green Lane, Downley HP13 5TT

**All event entries are open between 1 – 26 June**

*Fran Lazenby, Festival Committee Chairman*



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# News from Downley Pharmacy

Firstly, a huge thank you for all the tokens of appreciation and thanks we have received in recent weeks. It is an absolute honour to serve such a wonderful community as Downley. We would especially like to thank the street reps organized by the DPC Covid Action Group for stepping up so quickly with deliveries to those staying home at this time.

As I write this, we are at the end of April so after 4 full weeks of full lockdown we are getting used to our new way of working. We have full perspex screening in place in front of the counter and customers follow the social distancing rules well. Please come forward to the screen and speak up when it is your turn to be served; we are all finding it difficult to hear requests especially when face coverings are worn. We have lost the facility of the private consultation room, which is unfortunate, but we can still be discreet when the situation demands it.

The run up to lockdown was an absolute frenzy but things are now calmer and steadier, with most items available once more, although for some items in high demand prices have gone up considerably which, unfortunately, we have to reflect at point of sale.

We have been the frontline in many ways with a belief that GPs are closed or too busy alongside a general fear of visiting A&E, the minor injuries unit or GP surgery for fear of catching the virus. We have therefore been giving advice on many cases of minor illness where a simple over the counter remedy can be purchased; pharmacy has definitely become the first point of advice. Hay fever due to tree pollens has been high during April, and with the grass pollen season approaching fast we have most remedies easily available. Prices for the generic products are very reasonable and well below the prescription fee.

At other times we have referred people on for more advanced care and tried to reassure, although reluctance to visit A&E when the need is clear has caused us a great deal of concern.

The weeks have gone quickly and phone calls from regulars who would pop in are now the norm, prompting an "I miss Mrs. X or Mr. Y" when the conversation ends. It has, however, been good to get to know some of their children and many times we have commented how they are like Mum or Dad. We have also made some family connections we were not aware of before, so really getting the family feel about Downey life.

Our collection point has become very popular, removing the need to queue to collect. Call us if you would like to make use of it. All that is required is your mobile telephone number for receipt of your PIN for each supply.

Like many businesses, though, we do fear financially. Community pharmacy has been underfunded for some time and now is feeling the strain more than ever. Put simply, the Government announced a cash injection for us at the start of April which was to enable us to pay the huge wholesaler bills resulting from the panic pre-lockdown. However, this cash is unfortunately merely an advance and will be clawed back later

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in the year when the preset prices the NHS pay for drugs supplied will go down. Drug costs to us have gone up, so reducing the margins used to pay the bills such as wages, rents, rates etc. For April there is a list of 74 medications whose agreed price has needed to be increased by the NHS (a system we call price concessions) as we simply cannot purchase at the usual price. This list should really be less than 10 items in a regular month. When May starts the game starts again and we have to report problems of supply and costs. I daresay the list for May will be even longer as prices continue to rise steadily. The biggest problem is if someone wants a product at the start of the month we have little choice but to chance it and obtain it, with the hope that the difference in cost will be covered by the list released later in the month, providing enough pharmacies have reported the inconsistency. Usually it is OK but not always! This is on top of the fact that margins have been decreasing for years now. A new funding arrangement imposed in September last year agreed more cash via services we would be providing. These services have been halted, or we cannot perform them due to conditions we now work in, so we are losing out on vital income stream which promised to keep us afloat. Pharmacies will close as a result of the current situation. We are fortunate that the residents of Downley and surrounding areas value the service we give, but it is a constant battle with the big boys and online pharmacies who deliver direct but whose services are not so personal in times of crisis.

Please continue to support us and we can remain your local healthcare provider. We have seen many new faces during this time and hope they will go on to become regular customers we can get to know even better.

## Downley Gardening Society

Unfortunately we have had to suspend our Spring talks and Summer garden visits. We had some fantastic speakers booked for the early months but are hoping to restart in the Autumn, and have The Butterfly Brothers booked for November along with other wonderful speakers. We are keeping in touch with members with an email newsletter with chat and pictures about our own gardens and helpful tips.



If you are missing your garden visits how about a virtual tour? The National Trust and other organisations have virtual tours available on their websites. I had a lovely drone tour over Exbury Gardens and RHS Wisley recently, all from the comfort of my armchair.

Please keep safe, enjoy your gardens and hope to see members and non-members, who are always very welcome, at one of our events.

“We have been cycling more than usual and spending much more time in the garden.”

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# News from some street reps.....

## *Southfield Road - Carole Flynn, street rep*

Southfield Road has really come together as a community since lockdown began.

One inspired resident organised a sweepstake on the virtual Grand National, raising money for the NHS along the way. Street rep Helen, who is an ICU nurse at Harefield, asked for donations to enable them to buy walkie talkies to ease safe communication between wards. The total raised was £12,000 (though this included money from other contributors as well).

We set up a WhatsApp group for the street with over 50 taking part. We have a mixture of young families and older, vulnerable residents in the road, and those not on WhatsApp are being checked on regularly by their neighbours. We've collected prescriptions; shopping; food for One Can Trust, and The Pastures Food Bank; duvet covers and toys for vulnerable families. We've shared plants and seedlings, skills and resources. An important focal point on our road has been The Downley Express, with them buying specific food from the cash and carry in direct response to requests from residents. They've also given away free food (including Easter Eggs to NHS workers) and are happy to deliver to those in need. In the early days, one resident's husband bought a surplus of food home from work - and many of us opened our doors to supplies of lemons and mushrooms!

Some of the weirdest things I've discovered during this time - an amazing amount of meetings carried out on Zoom including surreal choir rehearsals and a rather serious prayer time when one mischievous member instigated the special effects on a messenger video call and I spent half the meeting with a virtual cat on my head! But generally, all around, the best of human nature has come to the fore during this difficult time. We've all said that, once this is all over, it will be strange to meet face to face with people we have become so friendly with in the virtual world.

## *White Close - Melanie, street rep*

In our street we've used WhatsApp to share jigsaws; arranged a large order of plants; organised food bank donations; spotted starlink satellites; and possibly coordinated a socially distanced VE Day front garden street party. We had a great story early in lockdown where the WhatsApp group helped a household get their electricity back on after they woke to no power. Group chat helped them isolate the issue - which was a wall light that had been knocked off the wall by the kids' morning play! Another neighbour then assisted with making it safe so that power could be reinstated.

## *Talbot Avenue - Sarah, street rep*

During this time of uncertainty it has been heart-warming to be part of a community pulling together so brilliantly. Strangers who live in the street have become neighbours, neighbours friends and those friends the people we rely on to keep our spirits lifted. It's certainly true that socially distant doesn't have to mean emotionally distant and 'Team Talbot' continues to demonstrate this through: clapping for our carers; dancing on our driveways; daily messages of motivation; sharing delivery slots and shopping for one another; sharing fresh produce from gardens; recycling unwanted toys and books; stargazing; planning post-lockdown parties; bizarre conversations about setting up Tinder for guinea pigs; and SOS messages to remove wild birds from living room lampshades!

From our youngest 8 month old resident to our eldest 92 year old lovely long serving residents, and everyone in between, there is plenty going on in Talbot Avenue to keep us connected whilst we're apart!



## Downley War Memorial Hall

With all current activities at the Hall cancelled, including our proposed V.E. Day Commemorative tea, there is nothing to report.

Without access to the Bucks Free Press archive at High Wycombe Library I have to rely entirely on the internet, and there would be no "local" element which I consider vital, so my local history report from 1940/41 will have to wait until next time.

**Alan Baker** [alanbaker49@btinternet.com](mailto:alanbaker49@btinternet.com) 07890 762527



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# News from The Buckinghamshire Council

## and a personal message from Councillor Paul Turner



We find ourselves in an unprecedented situation. There is uncertainty, fear, confusion, loss - a huge range of emotions. The commencement of The Buckinghamshire Council seems so insignificant now I will just say that it has happened but has been overshadowed by events. The Council is working tirelessly, redeploying staff to key areas, and ensuring that residents, businesses, community groups and volunteers are being supported in every way it can, and vital services continue. For up to date information from the Council please see <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/> or, as always, please contact me.

I would like to thank the Downley Covid-19 Action Group Committee. They have organised so much for Downley and the surrounding area to ensure all residents have access to information and help. I am sure there will be updates elsewhere in this publication, but from me, thank you to you all.

When I was thinking about who we have to thank, I am proud to clap for the NHS (my wife works for the NHS and I see and hear first-hand about the enormous amount of extra work and the strain they are under), carers, supermarket and local shop workers, emergency services, teachers, refuse collectors, everyone who keeps us safe and supplied and keeps our communities and country, and world, running even in these difficult times, and of course we should be thanking all of these people, and keep doing so.

But we also should be thanking those individuals who volunteer, look in on their neighbour, make an extra phone call, say hello and smile when they pass a stranger during their socially-distanced walk, put something in the food-bank trolley at the end of their weekly shop. I could go on listing examples. But who are they? They are the individuals who would not presume to ask for thanks, or expect to be thanked, they are 'you and me', quietly going about making this world a better place in whatever way we can. I have often heard mentioned the 'new normal', and I sincerely hope that in the future, when we get through this - and we will - there will be a 'new normal' where we will look out for others in ways which do not look for as many 'likes' as possible on Facebook, or that do not seek public attention by posting selfies at every opportunity, or look for something, anything, in return as a reward. We can change the world, and it starts with 'you and me', not Councils or Governments; one neighbour looking out for another. It is infectious and it spreads. I am looking forward to the 'new normal' and if one good thing comes out of our current crisis it will be a new focus on community, friendship, genuine altruistic caring for each other. And so to all those reading this who deserve a 'thank you' but are unknown except to yourself - Thank You.

**Paul Turner, Buckinghamshire Councillor for Downley**

**f** [paul.turner@wycombe.gov.uk](mailto:paul.turner@wycombe.gov.uk) 07825 842292

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# Filming in Downley!!

Oh What Fun!! Well on the day it was, but the lead up was anything but...talk about stressful!! I was informed one day, out of the blue, by Mel Smith of the Downley & Disraeli Food Bank, based at the Downley Pastures Church, that our road was being put forward as a great example of how the community is coping and supporting each other during the 'Lockdown'. 'Oh how lovely, because the residents have been really amazing supporting each other!!' I said.

Then I was told what this would involve...filming the road -Yes, ok! Interviews - 'Weeell OK!?! BBC!?! ROSS KEMP!?! And they want you as the street rep to speak about being a street rep on your road. OH MY GOODNESS! PANIC!

I spoke with my counterpart street reps, Jenny and Rayne, who decided it should be me to speak; thanks..

Curve Media, who are making the programmes for the BBC Britain's Volunteer Army, contacted me and explained this would be a street level piece for inclusion as part of the series of programmes (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2020/ross-kemp-britains-volunteer-army> to be shown in May/June) about how people have been coping, and how the Lockdown has affected them.

The 4/5 day process leading up to the actual day on Monday 4 May 2020 ( Yes Treckies...Let the Force be with US...please) was, to say the least, rushed and frenzied with emails and phone calls flying back and forth between Curve Media and myself and between me and the residents I was asking to take part. The requisite: to show a cross-section of ages and families with young children situations.

I must say that almost everyone said yes immediately and 'How Exciting'...I wasn't feeling it yet. Strange, but the men were more reluctant than the ladies, funny that!! So after 4/5 days of this too-ing and fro-ing the schedule was set, it would take place on Monday 4th between 2pm and 6pm and now I could relax, a little.

At last I felt a little easier knowing the plan was set, now I just had to try and plan what I wanted to say on the day, if given the opportunity.

I sent out the schedule info to all residents, including: Don't wear stripes or logos; Don't put photos on Media sites till after filming has finished; Don't mention the road name.

Mark, the Cameraman/Producer, arrived about 2pm and stirred up interest amongst passers-by as he started taking footage of 'The Road', plants on garden walls, the very welcome donations of little home-made soaps donated anonymously via letterbox, or today left on doorsteps (using a bit of artistic licence), shopping being delivered, Pharmacy delivery to Angela G, etc - much of what I am sure goes on in and around the village in all our streets.

Ross arrived and everyone seemed to come out of the woodwork! Cars driving by slowly and even stopping, engines running, halted recordings as Mel was delivering the 'Sticky Buns' and was being interviewed by Ross, who stopped and spoke to anyone and everyone who called out. He waved happily and even moved across the road to stand at the 2m + distance behind for selfies without one grumble or complaint. All the residents said the same: 'What A Lovely Man! He's so easy to speak to!'

4.30pm and it was my turn for 30mins....oh heck! He came to our house and stood outside the garden wall and called my name a couple of times, I opened the door and we're off....

He asked about what the role was, how it came about, what it entails and why I had volunteered. Why had I volunteered? Just a moment's thought was needed - I volunteered because I'd taken early retirement from work 8 years ago and felt I needed to give something back to the village in some way, so I thought this is it, now or never! Not fully knowing what it would actually entail.

In the interview I tried to cover the task set us all as street reps and I hope I did us justice in portraying our road's journey: the call from the DPCAG, The task should you wish to accept it ...contact all households in your road and form a register and communication lines to disseminate information and put people in touch with each other. Simple!?

After setting up the communication lines for our road I personally am very grateful to have 2 more street reps, Jenny and Rayne, on board to share the responsibility for the road of 130+ households. We now have 94 out of 130 households linked and people are still coming forward 7 weeks in. We also have a wonderful team of willing and able resident delivery volunteers which is a real help to form a rota.

I spoke about the shared plants and seeds; Jenny B providing sourdough starter for bread making; Claire and Alan provide online music and theatre links; education ideas and online info for those who have children; Julie N collating a weekly bakery order from regular buyers to achieve a free delivery then dispatching each order to their doorsteps; and not forgetting the residents' enthusiastic support of the Food Bank collections; the list goes on.

I just had to tell Ross about our very own proactive Mother and Daughter team. Mum Jenny recites a daily selected poem and talented Daughter Rebecca (who is trained as a Digital Artist) uses her skills to portray this in picture form. It's called 'Keeping Downley Up!' (see P26 for more details) I have heard that they have achieved recognition from some poets' societies (Dylan Thomas, John Betjeman, Rudyard Kipling and the British Music Hall Society), who want to use their rendition, especially Rebecca's digital art work..

Moving on. Following his piece to camera, it was time for Ross to deliver the 'Sticky Buns' to the chosen few when he carried out a short interview with each, including Jenny B, Rita, a lovely resident who has lived in the same home in Downley since her marriage in 1954, Nathalie and her young family and Sarah, a young Mum with partner, a toddler and a 5 week old baby.

From the comments made and people's happy faces, everyone enjoyed the experience and the bit of excitement on our road.

I know we all hope that the lasting outcomes of our 'communication links' are the friendships and caring relationships that are forming between us all. We have all had to face something so bad happening in the world; however, in the true British spirit we have still managed to create something good. Long may that last, long after lockdown ends. We are proud of our road and proud of our village, and we have fantastic support and direction from our DPC CAG. The residents are already talking of keeping the chat group open and planning for a street party and village party at the end of all this!! In the meantime, stay home and stay safe!



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# Keeping Downley Up (beat)

*Jenny Douglas*

In mid-March, I was driving home from teaching at a School in Abingdon and coming to terms with the fact that all schools were bound to go into lockdown very shortly. Several of my more vulnerable neighbours and friends had already gone into voluntary self-isolation and I was beginning to wonder how best to keep in touch with them, keep all our spirits up and have something to “say” if - as I suspected - the Covid-19 lockdown was going to be prolonged.

The BBC Six o'clock News was on the car radio and they had taken to finishing the broadcast with something “uplifting” each day; ranging from birdsong in woods, to funny snippets of Martin Jarvis reading “Just William”. Which prompted the idea of starting to do an illustrated poem online every day while lockdown continued and to send them out to friends and family and others via the Downley Next-door Neighbourhood group.

I thought this might be a way to cheer people up and also keep in contact with friends and family by having something different to send each day. So even if there wasn't much else new to talk about, we would at least have the poems and pictures.

The project was very much dependant on my elder daughter Rebecca, who is a trained Arts Animation Concept and Visual FX artist. But she was happy to give it a go, as her commission and online design work had all but dried up in current climate. She is the real creative force behind the project.

Together we have now been producing a poem a day since 18th March with new ones coming online at 10am. They can be found on Youtube, Twitter and Downley Nextdoor as well as via Downley Community Facebook link.

And the poems have proved a very useful way of keeping conversation going with old friends – and striking up conversations with new people.

We try to alternate classic or well-known poems with the less familiar or unusual. The poems are illustrated as “Speed Drawings”, so you can actually see the process of creation in time to the poem as it is spoken. It is very much an audio -visual experience. The example here - a Haiku with accompanying illustration – is the most simple example. It would not be possible to reproduce the others on the printed page.



## *Cat Haiku*

The rule for today.  
Touch my tail, I shred your hand.  
New rule tomorrow.

If you would like to see the full playlist you can find us on Youtube at Keeping Downley Up [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkbf\\_QrUxkRVqYBC1a54nVg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkbf_QrUxkRVqYBC1a54nVg). If you subscribe you will be notified in your recommended list when each new poem appears. Or we can be found on Twitter @DownleyUp.

Hope you enjoy. And we do like requests – as long as poems aren't too long and Rebecca can find a way to bring them to life.

---

# Living in lockdown

Hello everyone!

My name is Lorna Murray and my husband and I (goodness, I sound like the queen) live in Plomer Green Avenue. Don and I are eighty and this is how we are living in lockdown...

Firstly, our wonderful daughter in Thame gets a big shop and brings it on Sunday, our everyday needs are provided by a lovely young neighbour, the Saturday newspaper delivered to the door by another. We have received offers and been given help by many others. Not to forget our invaluable pharmacy. We are overwhelmed and very thankful.

## How do we keep occupied?

Last year we bought a treadmill. After a while Don gave it up because of severe knee pain and I gave it up because of severe laziness! However, we are back exercising as Don is confined to the house for weeks.

I suspended Downley Art Group but two of our members suggested going on WhatsApp: what a brilliant idea! Thursday morning at 9.30, we sit down in our own homes and work. At 12.00 we send pictures of our work while those who aren't on WhatsApp are telephoned for descriptions of their art. We also belong to the Chipmunks woodcarving group and Maggie who runs it, rings to check up on us.

Then there's the garden where Don has been repairing a large five bar gate and I have started to renovate a garden bench. We also read a great deal and both have Kindles for books, news, games and puzzles. I love Scrabble and Don does tiny jigsaw puzzles.

On TV, we will miss Only Connect and University Challenge on Mondays. I rarely get a connection and put sub-titles on for University Challenge to understand the questions better – and, guess what? It doesn't work!

We also miss our weekly visit to the Le De Spencers for lunch and to see our friends there.

Don says the world has gone back to our childhood, few cars and few aeroplanes.

Quieter. These are appalling and tragic times, my fellow villagers, but as a friend of mine said 'Downley is a wonderful place to grow old, everyone is so helpful'.

Stay safe.

## Downley Parish Council priorities



At last year's Downley Day, Downley Parish Council (DPC) asked for input on its initiatives. Given the incredible response, DPC would like to repeat the exercise. To help, an on-line questionnaire has been opened.

DPC are inviting everyone to give their views on the current priorities as well as ranking other activities that DPC is involved in. This will ensure the right amount of time and focus is being dedicated to them.

**Link:** <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/2R3P7XV> Open until 31st August 2020.

We will give a summary of conclusions at Downley Day.

---

# Short Story Competition

Time on your hands? It's quite likely that you do have time, perhaps in abundance in these strange circumstances, to pursue hobbies and interests. For budding - unpublished - writers, here's an opportunity to enter a competition with the tempting prize of being published in an illustrated book produced by HLP, Happy London Press. The competition is sponsored by HLP and Wycombe Sound, along with other partners.

Details are here: <https://www.happylondonpress.com/hi2020-competition>, but note that the deadline for entries has been extended to 20 July and may be extended again if the current situation continues for an indefinite time. HLP also have podcasts available on their site with hints and tips for writing an effective and enjoyable short story (including four podcasts by me)

If you're interested in attending a workshop on creative writing/short stories, get in touch with me. I run workshops at WAC, Wycombe Arts Centre.

*France Ellul* - E: [france.ellul@gmail.com](mailto:france.ellul@gmail.com) [www.france-ellul.com](http://www.france-ellul.com)

## Puzzle Corner

*All puzzles have a solution. No puzzle is set that is impossible to solve.*

### Puzzle One: Fox, Goat, Cabbages

To protect his identity, let's call him Bert. Anyway, Bert has a problem. He has to cross a river with three things: a fox, a goat and some cabbages. He can use his boat but it can only hold him plus one of the three things which he has to get across to the other side of the river. So, he could take either the fox or the goat or the cabbages but only one at a time. If he left the fox alone with the goat, the fox would eat the goat. If he left the goat alone with the cabbages, the goat would eat the cabbages.

See if you can work out for yourself how Bert could get all three things across the river safely, without being eaten!

### Puzzle Two: The Nine Pearls

You have nine pearls. Eight of them are fake pearls, and one is a real pearl.

All nine pearls look and feel identical. The only difference is that the real pearl is slightly heavier than a fake pearl.

You have the use of a balance scale and nothing else.

The difference in weight is so small that you MUST use the scale.

The ONLY way to find the real pearl is by weight, using the balance scale.

The eight fake pearls all weigh exactly the same as each other.

There are, of course, many answers; however, the best answer is the one that uses the scales the least amount of times. So a solution using the scales 7 times is better than a solution using the scales 8 times.

What's the best answer? In other words, how many times (smallest number) do you use the scales to guarantee finding the real pearl? By the way, you can NOT depend on luck!

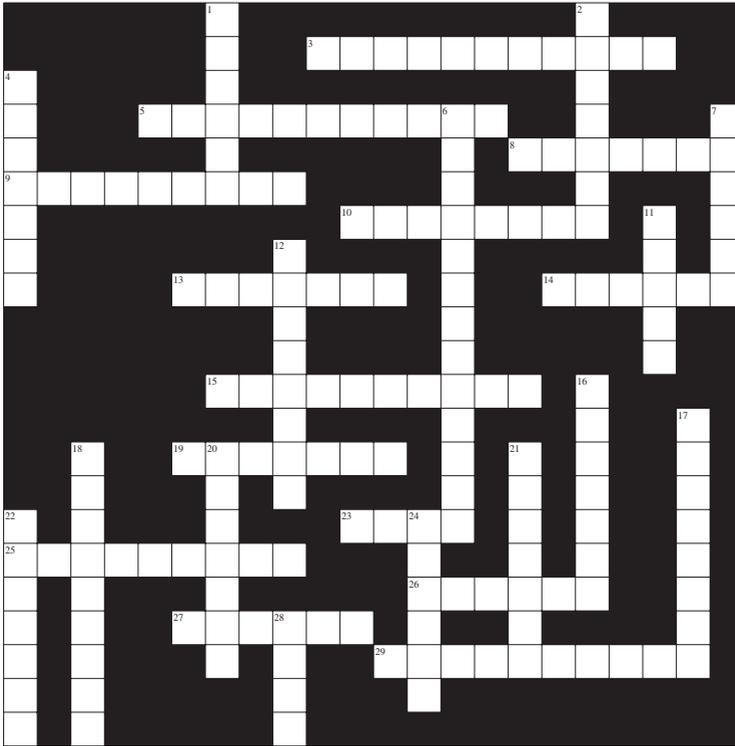
### Puzzle Three: The Egg Timer Puzzle

I like my eggs to be boiled for exactly 9 minutes. The problem is that I have no way to measure time except for two egg timers that are able to measure precisely 4 and 7 minutes respectively.

There is more than one way to set up the timers to measure exactly 9 minutes; however, I am keen to eat my egg as soon as possible. Can you help?

**All solutions will be in the next edition of the Downley Village News. If you can't wait for the solutions until then, email the Puzzle Master at: [france.ellul@gmail.com](mailto:france.ellul@gmail.com)**

# Local Crossword



## Across

3. Our horticultural expert (11)
5. Popular beer available at Le De Spencers Arms (6,5)
8. Early years Cubs/Scouts - good at building dams (7)
9. Hills we live in (9)
10. Young Brownies/Guides - show of support for NHS and other Key Workers (8)
13. Printing machine used to produce Royal Mail stamps to commemorate Queen Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee. Now a 'Mews' in the Hughenden Quarter (7)
14. Original use of the LeDe building (6)
15. Seen around our streets in late May and June (10)
19. Wycombe MP in 1990 (7)
23. Dug from the 'Dells' of Downley Common (4)
25. Our annual festival - cancelled this year (2,7)
26. Played at the Community Centre on Thursday evenings (6)
27. Chair maker; Blues mascot and highest scorer (6)
29. Wycombe Wanderers old ground (6,4)

## Down

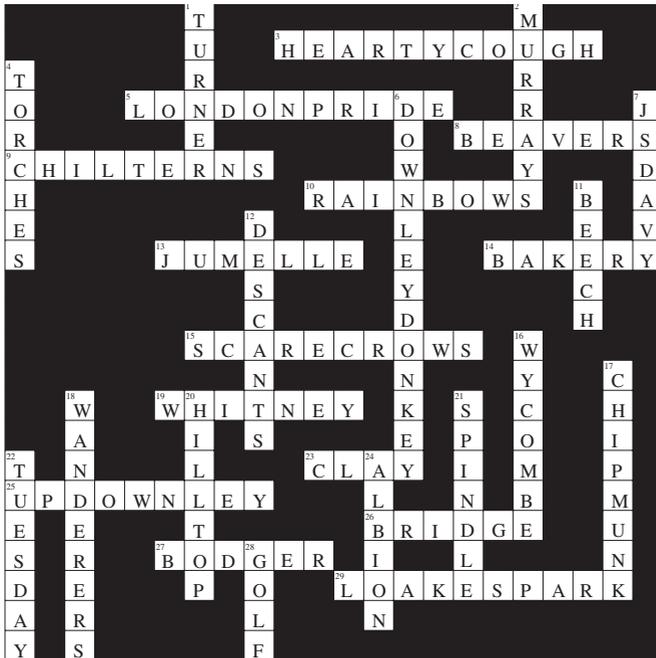
1. One of Downley's councillors (6)
2. Wycombe department store famous for it's clock (7)
4. Carried in procession to the bonfire on 5th November (7)
6. Local beast who gave his name to a pub (7,6)
7. 1960s High Wycombe toyshop at the junction of High Street, Crendon Street, Easton Street and Queen Victoria Road (1,1,4)
11. Wood commonly used by the local chairmakers (5)
12. Downley choir (8)
16. & 18. Football team with a CV including Semi-finalists of FA Amateur Cup; FA Trophy; FA Cup and League Cup (7,9)
17. Animal let loose on Wednesday mornings in the Oak Room at the Community Centre (8)
18. See 16. above
20. Military name for Hughenden Manor during WW2 (7)
21. Rod used as the back of a Windsor chair (7)
22. Downley Parish Council meeting day (7)
24. The village's senior football club (6)
28. Game historically played on the Common (4)

**ANSWERS ON PAGE 28**

# Cryptic Birds

How many can you get, answers on page 50

No.	Clue	Letters			
			17	Messing about in the air	7
1	In all corners of a Chess Board	4	18	Flag decorations for the book club	4,7
2	Charge from the cutlery store	9	19	Oddy or Gates annoyed	9
3	Young cat is up now	9	20	Trade of a burglar	5
4	Sign that the sentence is death	8	21	Flying Wizard	6
5	Steer slightly to right or left	6,4	22	Enjoyed during free time	5
6	Colourful tool	6,6	23	Very windy evening	11
7	100 chews precede this	7	24	Result you may experience if you upset a dog	7
8	The black and white dog is happy	4,7	25	Vote for Labour	7
9	Telephone 15 21 26 05 12	4,5	26	Scottish musician on the beach	9
10	Royal male takes time out for his hobby by the river	10	27	Big ride at the theme park	6
11	Detains the holder of the pearl	13	28	Woman of the sea in dark blue	4
12	A badge for the scouts	4	29	Discussion between the pebbles on the beach	9
13	Bright toy flying in the wind	3,4	30	Result of walking up a steep hill	6
14	Get out of the way the enemy are firing	8	31	One for the road before bedtime	8
15	Greedy person at meal time	6	32	Boast	4
16	Used to shave William	9	33	Fuel to get you through bad weather	5,6



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# WI WordSearch



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R	Q	U	N	U	F	E	C	W	L	O	D	G	E	B	T	J	I	L	K
E	E	I	S	Y	E	Q	I	J	A	M	E	S	M	M	N	J	D	A	P
B	L	Z	F	U	P	S	N	R	D	Y	O	W	T	Q	E	T	Z	H	O
H	V	B	L	R	P	A	D	D	A	L	V	P	B	U	D	F	T	D	E
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W	A	N	L	I	U	C	O	T	Y	M	R	K	O	W	S	B	E	R	Z
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G	B	O	U	L	U	O	C	H	T	C	L	R	B	V	R	R	N	N	Y
D	E	C	G	C	N	N	S	K	Z	J	R	N	V	P	P	S	O	E	I
R	R	R	B	S	S	C	D	B	I	T	B	U	W	K	N	C	R	T	F
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U	T	G	Q	V	O	R	E	E	T	T	I	M	M	O	C	P	N	C	U
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I	L	I	T	E	R	A	R	Y	A	Q	Q	N	Q	J	N	U	F	N	Y
N	B	T	P	N	G	Y	H	F	S	J	R	H	Q	I	T	E	T	D	E
G	O	E	D	T	D	E	N	M	A	N	L	J	Z	Q	V	D	C	G	Q
S	O	E	I	S	R	A	K	Z	F	B	K	B	O	F	J	G	F	D	T
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"Got the chess board out for the first time in 15 years."

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# A Tale of Two Sitters

After the lockdown, we'll all be stretching our muscles, yearning for a change of scene. Ever thought of using your home or pet care experience to help you travel on a budget? Well, you can exchange your experience for free accommodation by housesitting while the homeowners are away.

Do you need someone to cherish your pats when you go on holiday? With HouseSitMatch you can find petsitters who stay in your home and it's free! Exchanges are organised through HouseSitMatch, a family firm based in High Wycombe.

## Housesitter Elizabeth – Retired Academic

Elizabeth, seen above with Brook and Bailey her pet charges last Summer, loves being active. She's a retired lecturer and finds housesitting a fun way to travel on a fixed budget. She prefers the home setting to an anonymous hotel or hostel. In exchange, she cares for pets in their own home while the owners are away.

## Housesitter Bragi – Icelandic Security Guard

Bragi started housesitting when he turned 60, as a way to escape the winters in Iceland, and in preparation for retirement. He loves to visit warmer climates.

## What makes HouseSitMatch unique?

We are a managed site and facilitate police and background checks. It helps us maintain a high bar for online safety.

## How does it work?

You join HouseSitMatch.com as a member (there is a small membership fee to join). You get ID checked for safety and then apply for the housesit you want. The housesitters care for the pets and home for free. In exchange they stay in the owners' home without paying rent. Housesitters pay for their own travel to get to the site. It's a fair exchange. Please see below all the details on how to join either as a housesitter or to request a housesitter.

## To join

Register online via [www.Housesitmatch.com](http://www.Housesitmatch.com)  
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[www.bridgewebs.com/downley](http://www.bridgewebs.com/downley)



"More time together as a family: the kids grow up quickly and you don't get that time back."

---

# St James' Church



This is such a strange time for us all. When I came to St James' last July, I little thought that I would be spending a quarter of my first year taking services over the internet and all my pastoral visiting by 'phone!

The community spirit that I saw from my first moment in Downley has completely come into its own during this lockdown period. The Parish Council has done an incredible job in setting up the street reps, and so many people are volunteering and giving their time in different ways. There is such a strong sense of walking through this together, people smiling and saying hello when out for their daily walk and checking up on each other. As we continue to walk through this virus, with all the restrictions it places on us and the suffering that it is causing, physically, emotionally and financially, I think there are 3 things we can do to help us through this time:

**Look inward** and take care of ourselves and our households. As well as keeping safe by social distancing and adhering to all the government advice, we need to care for ourselves emotionally. As a community, nation and world, we are all going through a time of grief and loss; loss of freedom, loss of independence, loss of time spent with friends and relatives, loss of income, and there are also people who have lost loved ones at this time, either through the virus or other illness, for whom that grief is very deep right now. So many of us will have experienced some of the emotions associated with grieving: moments of feeling very low and tearful or angry, finding it hard to concentrate and make decisions. All of these are normal signs of grief and loss, but it's important to acknowledge them and to be kind to ourselves at this time.

**Look Outward** to others in our community, especially those around us who are vulnerable. Jesus said that the second greatest commandment is to "Love your Neighbour as yourself"... as I said already, we have seen so many examples of wonderful love and support for each other within the Downley community in recent weeks.

Look Upward to God for his strength, comfort and guidance. I realise that many people are fearful at this time, but we need to hold on to the promises in the bible where God tells us that he will never leave us or forsake us, he will walk with us through everything that we face. The Church of England has produced a booklet of prayers, and here is a prayer you might find helpful at this time:

PRAYING  
for you, praying  
for everyone.



#candletohope

*Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low; That we may rejoice in your comfort Knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen*

At St James we have moved to having our services using Zoom, which is working really well. People log in and we can see each other and everyone can take part in the services. If you would like to join us at 11am on a Sunday morning please email [heather.graham@stjamesdownley.org.uk](mailto:heather.graham@stjamesdownley.org.uk) and I will send you the link. Do look at our website for other

---

information on our services and on ideas for children's activities - [www.stjamesdownley.org.uk](http://www.stjamesdownley.org.uk)  
We have been starting each service with a time of thankfulness, because when we are feeling low it is helpful to focus on the positives, however small they are - and actually every week people find they have many things that they are thankful for. I think there has especially been a much greater appreciation of nature and the beauty of creation all around us in this area, as we make the most of that time outside each day. There has also been a much greater appreciation of community, of friends and neighbours, and people have shifted their focus from their own concerns and worries to thinking about those who are in a more difficult situation around them.

So as we continue to walk through this difficult time, I encourage each of you to take a moment each day to be thankful for the good things in your life, and to remember those, in our community and across our world, who are struggling so much more than us at this time.

*Rev Heather Graham*

## You'll Never Walk Alone with Downley Descants



In these troubled times we in the Downley Descants are feeling really short-changed, although we know everyone is in the same situation. We miss the camaraderie and friendship that the choir gives, not to mention the health benefits scientifically proven to be attributable to singing.

Our choir has become part of the village community over the last 7 years under the baton of our wonderful musical director, Louise, who knows how to get the best out of us. We are really looking forward to coming out of this terrible time so we can practise together again, always aiming for our next concert. Performing always gives us a buzz of excitement, not only by entertaining our audiences, but also being able to present a cheque to a worthwhile cause afterwards. Since we started in 2012 we have raised over £10,000, which we are very proud of.

We have recently opened up our e-mail group to all choir members and had some interesting snippets about what people are doing during the enforced lockdown. Things like DIY jobs that have been 'on the list' for 50 years and only now are being completed, or perfecting their Mr Twit impressions for reading bedtime stories to grandchildren (using social media), and watching National Theatre Live, Andrew Lloyd Webber musicals or Shakespeare, all put on by professional people to keep the arts going when theatres are shut. Some of us even attempted Gareth Malone's Great British Home Chorus, really enjoying the unusual warm-up routines as well as the singing.

A final mention must go to the inspirational Captain Tom Moore who has raised many millions of pounds for NHS charities. He has even made a record with Michael Ball - not bad for a 100 year old war veteran! The words of their song together sum up the situation very well:-

When you walk through a storm hold your head up high and don't be afraid of the dark; At the end of a storm there's a golden sky....

Here's to the day we see that golden sky and can start singing together again!

# Downley Evening WI

Dear friends, I hope you are all keeping safe and well. These are strange and troubling times, but they will pass. I find I cope best if I just focus on one day at a time, avoiding too much news because the media do love scaremongering... and keeping positive.

How impressed and amazed are we by Captain (now Colonel) Tom Moore? 100 years old today as I write, giving us all an inspiring example of courage and 'can-do' and so many folk are rising to the challenge of finding ways to help, whether shopping for a vulnerable person or by staying at home, staying safe, protecting each other and the wonderful NHS.

The members of the WI got the call to step up and help the NHS. There was an urgent need for laundry bags – bags which the NHS staff could use to put their soiled and possibly contaminated scrubs or uniforms into as they changed at the end of a shift so as to avoid cross-contamination. These bags, scrubs and all, could then be placed directly into the washing machine on a hot wash. A simple but effective and possibly life-saving idea. The appeal came to all – 'we need 1500 bags asap'. Our own WI was one which responded and a team of resourceful and talented ladies set to work, it was an amazing effort. The final total of bags made for the Bucks Federation of WIs was 3000, the surplus bags were then made available to other care professionals. I am very proud to be part of our organisation and of my friends and fellow members who rose to this challenge.

We have been keeping in touch by phone or internet during these times of isolation. We may be isolated but we don't need to be cut off. The phone calls and emails help to keep us connected and cheerful. In that spirit, we've made you a WI-themed wordsearch: a little distraction to play while you sit with your cuppa. Keep safe, everyone. Keep positive and cheerful. God bless all of you.

*Angela Taplin*



# Let's improve those photos!

*Saul gives us a couple of tips to help!*

Everyone has their individual story about how the current lockdown has affected their lives. As well as working from home, for me it has meant changes to my main hobby - photography.

Previously I'd enjoyed taking pictures in the countryside we are lucky enough to have around us, or taking my camera to Wycombe Wanderers games. All of that might have stopped, but I'm taking as many photos as before - it's just that they are all taken at home.

You don't need to go far to take great photographs, and under the current restrictions here are a couple of simple tips which will improve your photographs at home.

**Rule of thirds** - imagine the frame in your viewfinder is divided into nine equal parts by two horizontal lines and two vertical lines. Put the most important part of your composition along these imaginary lines, or at the points where the lines intersect. This will make your pictures more eye catching and give them more energy.



An example of rule of thirds being applied is in this picture I took in my garden. The centre of the heart-shape is roughly one third of the way from the right hand side of the frame, and the most in-focus flowers are roughly one third from the top of the shot.

**Leading lines** - a leading line is any line within a photograph used to draw your eye into the picture, or towards the picture's main subject. Paths, roads and railway lines are commonly used as leading lines. In this picture of a sock-bunny, I have used the bottom of the window frame as a leading line to draw the eye towards the bunny. You'll also notice I've used the rule of thirds, with the bunny sitting around one third from the right of the picture.



"Both I and the children have been learning photography on a short course."



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# J. Heartycough's Horticultural Hints

Summer 2020

Wal, hello orl you lot, wot gets orl yor gardin and plot vital information from me, wal, I dunno wot a business this virus thing is eh! I just opes you can still get on the gardin or plot or both, wot a godsend gardins and allotments are at these strange times, and no a'chattin too close either eh? Anyways, wot is a'goin on with yor sowin and and plantin now we're right in to summer, wal you shud ave got most of that done by now.. "Wot" ses Mrs H, "That'd be the day when you gets everything done, you just mucks about and gets in my way!" Wal that's another reason for getting up the plot, I knows where I am up there! So I reckons get yor bonny a'going, the smoke'll do for that virus, I never gets a cold when I've had a lung full of bonny smoke. Then get yor hoe out, I've been waterin my onions and of corse up comes the weeds, I allers reckons hoeing is one of them jobs wot no one likes doin, you can bet I'll hoe off a couple of onions at the same time! Then yor spuds'll be commin up, so don't forget them late frosts, so cover em up if Jack Frost is about.

I'm tryin to get one of my narrer beds ready for them squashes and marrers and the like. Them slugs luvs em, wal you can try using slug pellets but if you do cover over yor veg with nets to keep the birds off eating the slugs, or use some organic method like pikkin em orf and chukkin em over yor neighbours fence... I'm only jokin! Ha ha! Wal wot about beans eh? Orl sorts are good, full of nootryants,

my broad beans the best yet, and my runners, scarlet emperor old variety allers does well, and for summat for em to climb up there's plenty of poles in the hedges, them farmers seem to ave given up cutting em this last winter. Then wot about yor brassicas, wal you've just got to keep them pidgins orf, so get em covered, and if possible keep orf them cabbage white butterflies too. My 'spring hero' cabbages looks good, they was a favourite of a plot mate of mine, but he's gone to the great allotment in the sky. You may be a'wondering wot my French cousin Jean d'Artichoke is doin with this virus business? Wal, not much, his veg and vine plot is a bit away from his maison, and he's not allowed there! Wal, so wot about orl his crowin about his veg and wine, waal cryin now more like! He's just getting in the way at home and can't get out at all, wal do I feel sorry for him? I'll let you answer that eh? Wal that's about it for now, see you up the common, at a distance of corse.

Keep safe and a'bientot,

*J.H. sent from my iSpade.*



"I am sewing for the NHS: 54 scrubs bags and 33 headbands for masks so far."

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# Downley Ancestors

Part 10



## VE Day

My Maternal Grandfather, Alfred Charman, had been a regular soldier since enlisting (under age!) in November 1932. He served in the 3rd Medium Regiment Royal Artillery. I have his Certificate of Service which lists where he was at any given time during his total of 22 years' service, and I am also lucky to have a book which was written as a record to detail the operations, battles and day by day manoeuvres of his regiment 1939-45. Grandad never talked about the war; reading the book just makes it even more unimaginable what they all went through for years.

After leaving the Middle East through Egypt in May 1944, the regiment landed in Southern Italy. After eventually leaving Northern Italy in March 1945 they sailed to Marseille and moved through France and Belgium arriving in Holland in April.

### *An entry from the book for 8th May –*

'Amersfoort, Hilversum, Amsterdam, Alkmaar, Den Oever, the open sea washing the shores of North Holland. A list of names and places – but on the 8th May 1945, they were more than places, they were more than brick and stone and people, they were history in the making. VE day in England. In Holland the day when rivers of relief, gratitude, hate, hysteria, frustration, hope were undammed to make a torrent more powerful than those which had swept over Dutch homes and pastures, at the will of the German Armies who had breached the dykes, but never the spirits of the proud Dutch people.' and 'Have you seen strong men weeping like women by the road-side? Men, who for years had fought underground, and now could walk in daylight. Have you known women, young and old, surge forward to touch your arm, your coat, even your boots? Have you smelt flowers, tulips, daffodils, in thousands set upon the roadsides or strewn before your cars in honour? Have you seen the signs of death on the faces of mothers whose children had been stillborn? Have you passed the people of the cities with fear and famine their close companions during the long waiting years? Have you known hysteria that could not be controlled, any more than should the sweat pouring from a man when the fever in him breaks? Have you....? Yes, we of the 3rd Medium Regiment R.A. have seen and felt and known these things.'

My Grandad, with my Nan, visited Holland every other year to visit friends – I now know and understand when and why these friendships were formed, and they lasted a lifetime.

**We will remember them.**

*Paul Turner*





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# Downley Local History Group

Whether it was down to good planning or serendipity, the Downley Local History Group organised a talk at the Memorial Hall for late February rather than late March of this year, just avoiding the lockdown. The speaker, Frances Kerner of the Open Spaces Society, in her presentation entitled 'Downley Common: Its Origin and Survival within the Manor of West Wycombe', highlighted the multitude of possible reasons as to why Downley Common has survived whilst the commons of many of the surrounding parishes, such as Great and Little Missenden, Penn, Hughenden and Chepping Wycombe were enclosed and hence lost to future possible enjoyment by all members of the public.

A notable feature of her talk was the inclusion of many of the old West Wycombe Manor Estate maps. I don't know if, whilst walking the bridlepath from Downley to the Pedestal at West Wycombe, you, like me, have questioned the function of the concrete steps located where the path divides (shown below), and wondered when they were constructed. The only thing we know for certain is that there were steps here prior to 1767, as they are



recorded on a map of the region from this time, shown by Frances Kerner, but whether what we see today is original is another question. As to why, we don't know that either, but it may be that the records of West Wycombe Manor hold both answers.

Frances Kerner also pointed out that the Le De Spencers Arms Inn was first recorded in 1769/70 in West Wycombe before transferring to Downley by 1840. The licence in the Downley location was first held by a member of the Bristow family. As an aside, are you aware that the first school in Downley was not, as widely believed, the current community centre at the end of Chapel Street but that honour belongs to the Wesleyan Chapel on the common; that in 1893 Sir Edward Dashwood built a 9-hole golf course on Downley Common which accounts for the names Golf Links Villa and Cottages of the houses at the far end of Plomer Green Lane; that in 1912 Col Cody, a noted early pioneer of aviation in the UK, had to force-land his biplane in a field adjacent to Downley Common; and that mains water and gas only arrived in Downley in the mid-1930s?

In time, much of the above information and more will be made available on our website which is planned to go live later this year. However with COVID-19, the times we are living through are what in the future will be regarded as 'historic'. To this end we would really like to include personal records as to how Downley folk coped with homeschooling, social isolation and distancing, working from home, and any of the many other ways that the lockdown and the virus have affected 'normal' life. Perhaps your children would also like to contribute. The intention is for the material to eventually be made available to all on the website.

If you can help please e-mail [downleyhistory@btinternet.com](mailto:downleyhistory@btinternet.com) or contact Brian Knott on 07791 853504. In the meantime Stay Safe!

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# Downley Cricket Club



Normally, the smell of freshly-mown grass and bright sun in blue skies heralds the arrival of the cricket season. But these are, sadly, not normal times and our members, like everyone, are very concerned about the devastation caused by this pandemic. In February, with new skills being honed and techniques perfected in indoor nets, who would have predicted this! A few new players - of varying ability, but enthusiastic - turned up having read about us in the Village News, keen to be involved when matches started. But cricketers are nothing if not eternal optimists, and the cricket square is being cut and rolled as part of regular daily exercise, always observing social-distancing. The outfield too is taking shape and waking up from the long winter's hibernation. Posted online on social media have been several 'matches' held in family back-gardens, with carefully mocked-up fully-detailed score-boards, with Downley always beating arch-rivals (eternal optimism to the fore).

The unseasonably good weather in April has encouraged plenty of regular daily exercise and jogs in the county's wonderful greenery, and when the rains come we will try to keep fit and strong indoors.

**If you would like to play, umpire or score for Downley CC, when the season gets underway, please contact the club. Details are on our website [www.downleycc.co.uk](http://www.downleycc.co.uk)**



L to R : Barry Oliver, Susan Hall, Peter Hall, Jean Oliver, Martin Birkett, Francis Braganza, Philip Westall, Sarah Birkett, Kathy Westall, Gill Braganza (not pictured)

## Downley CC at Cape Town 2nd Test Match between South Africa and England - January 3-7th 2020

It seems a long time ago now, when life was normal, but in January a group associated with Downley Cricket Club went out to Cape Town to support the England (and drink a little wine!). The group arrived in Cape Town over several different dates with the idea of going to Day 4 of the test match. After a bit of panic on Day 3 when rumours were circulating that tickets were sold out and online prices were in excess of £100 per person with ticket resale companies, we took the decision to drive to the ground at Newlands and see if we could purchase tickets at the ticket office.....in the end we got tickets at £8 each! We sat on the grass bank with Table Mountain in the background (pictured), witnessing what can only be described as one of the most iconic views at cricket grounds anywhere in the world. About 805 of the crowd was from the UK and we proudly displayed our flag all day.

We decided to go back for Day 5 and sit near to the Barmy Army (England's official touring supporters club). A quiet day of cricket proceeded until after tea when all of a sudden England started taking wickets, and ended up winning the game with about 9 overs left..... the first time England had won at Cape Town since 1957! An enjoyable and celebratory night followed down at the Waterfront.

The rest of the holiday entailed all the local tourist attractions, of which there are many, and for a subset of the party a trip to Franschoek to visit the wineries.

A fantastic holiday was had by all. Next trip, January 2024!

***Martin Birkett***

# CHAMELEON SINGLES GROUP



We started the year with some good events, getting off to a healthy start with a walk from West Wycombe at the start of January. Our Lunch Club and Coffee Morning followed offering members a chance to meet up and enjoy some time together. Into February we had our now annual Pancake Evening which is always a popular 'at home' event along with our take-away evenings that we run several times a year.

Having made some great plans at our AGM and the Pub Night in February, little did we know how things were going to change come March, and how quickly they did. Our Fish and Chip Supper was the first event to be cancelled on 20th March due to COVID-19. Since then we have held our events virtually using the internet platform "Zoom" and conference calls, the latter being so we could include everyone even without the internet. Several of us joined in a virtual supper from home, Pub Night, Coffee Morning and even a night at the Rebellion Brewery!

Unfortunately, even with the wonders of the internet it has not been possible to replicate events such as going to the theatre, comedy evenings or any live functions. However, using Zoom and conference calling, which has been new to most members, we are still keeping in touch. Hopefully it will not be too long until we can safely meet up for events again but in the meantime keeping our members safe and in touch is our priority. When we are able to return to the "new normal" it is hoped most of our regular events can resume. These include Lunch Club, Pub Night and Coffee Mornings. We will of course amend these in order to stay within the guidelines issued by the Government.

If you are single, 40-60's, looking for a great social life and new friends then why not give us a try? There are no strangers at Chameleon, just new friends to be made. We have several local people from Downley, West Wycombe, Bledlow Ridge, Sands and surrounding areas and you would be very welcome too.

**To find out more call our membership secretaries Terrie on 01494 445816, Trevor on 01494 529067 or e-mail: [info@chameleonsingles.org.uk](mailto:info@chameleonsingles.org.uk). Visit us on-line at [www.chameleonsingles.org.uk](http://www.chameleonsingles.org.uk) for more information and our current programme or connect with us through Facebook.**

## **COULD YOU BE A CHIPMUNK?**



The Chipmunks are a small group of Woodcarvers who meet up once a week at the Downley Community Centre.

We would welcome new members, experienced or not, to our group. We meet on Wednesday mornings from 10.00-12.00 in the Oak Room at the Centre, just off School Close. Whilst not teachers we are happy to give advice and help.

**Phone Margaret 01494 523 912**

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# From Westminster

*Steve Baker - MP for Wycombe*



Life for all of us has changed dramatically during the coronavirus crisis. Parliament has returned and MPs are ensuring the Government is scrutinised and your concerns represented. There is a limit on the number of MPs who can be in the Chamber at the moment, and I am only travelling occasionally into Westminster. We are currently using a hybrid model, and I am spending a great deal of time contributing to debates, asking questions and participating in the work of the Treasury Select Committee via a video link from my home office.

Over the past few weeks I have been contacted by many constituents who have questions and concerns about the Government's plans for combatting Covid-19. My team and I have been in continuous contact with local individuals and businesses to solve problems, provide support and make suggestions to Ministers. Bucks Business First is coordinating local support for business; it has details of all the Government schemes to help companies, the self-employed and non-statutory organisations and I want to pay tribute to their work.

Throughout the coronavirus period, I and my fellow Bucks MPs have been in regular contact with the NHS, Buckinghamshire Council, and Thames Valley Police about our public services' response to the crisis. During my daily exercise I have seen the sign in Downley offering help for people who are self-isolating or who are being shielded through your outstanding arrangements. All local volunteers, our public servants, together with key workers in the private sector, deserve our thanks, praise and support for their outstanding work. So, whatever part you have played over the past few weeks to keep our community together, I sincerely thank you.

I am particularly grateful to the police in Wycombe and across Thames Valley for their common-sense approach. I have received no complaints. The Deputy Chief Constable continues to update MPs on the Local Resilience Forum, a multi-agency process for cooperation under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, which brings in the new Buckinghamshire Council and our local NHS.

Thanks to the tremendous work of staff, the NHS has had sufficient capacity to meet the demands made of it. It is important people with concerns about other health issues should not be reluctant to ask for medical help at this time: staff are available to deal with all medical problems, not just those with symptoms of Covid-19.

All the machinery of Government has bent to the task of building a bridge for business through this crisis in the hope we will recover swiftly. At the time of writing no date has been announced for the restrictions to be eased but I am hopeful this will happen before too long and we will all be able to resume more normal lives once again.



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# Starlight Stores helping the community

As a local business Starlight Stores is doing all it can to support the community, especially the vulnerable and those who may be self-isolating. The shop is restocked every day and fresh fruit and vegetables are brought in midweek and sometimes again on a Saturday.

A variety of groceries is available including bread, milk, eggs- even flour! In addition, although the cafe is closed, all its food and beverages are available for takeaway, and hot food and pizzas are available for collection or via Just Eat and Deliveroo. And for those who don't "do" the internet, orders can be taken over the phone for collection or delivery. Sam also runs a vegetable fruit and grocery delivery via [www.vegboxshop.co.uk](http://www.vegboxshop.co.uk).

Open 9.00 - 6.00 Mon - Thur, until 7.00 Fri - Sat and 10.00 - 5.00 on Sunday.

Takeaway service usually runs till 8.00 pm and possibly later if there is a demand for it.

Sam and his team- Riaz, Valerie and Steve - are committed to providing excellent and understanding customer service and will do everything they can to help their community. Sam appreciates the support and loyalty of his customers both old and new in these difficult times. Running a small independent business is always a struggle, more so now in the current climate, but by supporting each other however we can, we will all get through this crisis.

## Downley Theatre Group

Lockdown has scuppered plans somewhat!

Thanks to Chris White for this piece about our experiences on Monday 16 March: "The coach arrived early for our trip to see "Waitress – the Musical" and we all got on with anticipation of another fantastic evening. We arrived outside the theatre, as we thought in plenty of time for coffee. Then people started to notice that not much was going on and whispers started around the coach that the theatre was not open. This was soon confirmed when the Manager boarded the coach to apologise as the decision had been made to cancel all performances, but hoped to see us all in the future. The journey was not a total disappointment as the sights of London are always amazing, especially at night and having a good and happy driver also helped."

Obviously, we'd checked earlier in the day that the Theatre was open and the performance was going ahead. We left Downley at 4.55 and the PM announced social distancing measures after that. We are awaiting the refund of the ticket costs.

Meanwhile, we had already received tickets for "Hairspray" with Michael Ball at the London Coliseum on 6 May. The production was postponed and we're now off to see it 30 September. Further ahead, we're booked to see "Hello, Dolly!" in November.

As always, do get in touch with any questions using the dedicated email address or land line number. New members welcome, although goodness knows when we'll organize something beyond the outings mentioned.

*Alan & Claire Baker* [downleytheatregroup@gmail.com](mailto:downleytheatregroup@gmail.com) 01494 437552

# The Downley School

School closures in England might have come into effect suddenly, but The Downley School was organised and ready. Lockdown had barely been confirmed when I received a call from headteacher Ms Taylor. My son has special educational needs, and she was calling to check that he would remain at school. "No uniform needed, plenty of outdoor activity, he will enjoy himself," was the gist of the message. And so it came to pass...

There are around twenty children attending school currently. They are enjoying a structured curriculum that includes exercise such as yoga, online study and plenty of creativity. The pupils are settled, happy and mixing with peers that they don't normally mix with.

Children who are at home are contacted by teachers regularly (teachers are working flat out right now, with two audiences to consider). Staff recently featured in an engaging video to say hello to them, set to the sound of Bob Marley's 'Three Little Birds'. This was a chance to reassure the children that the teachers (and the school's chickens) were all OK.

The school has made it clear that parents are not expected to be "superheroes" in this challenging time - it is impossible to work and also provide a full day of schooling to children. What is most important is that the children follow a predictable structure, including exercise and time away from screens.

Ms Taylor is aiming for the current situation to be a catalyst for change - plans are underway to incorporate a more therapeutic feel into classrooms that will support the children back into learning once schools are fully open.

In recent days, sadly, the school has been broken into again. Nothing was taken on this occasion, but the intruders caused damage and - as Ms Taylor pointed out - endangered themselves as well as innocent parties. The frequency of the break ins surely points to a local group being involved.

Let's try to end things on a positive note. "We set the weather at the school," Ms Taylor told me. "If we are happy and sunny then the school will be too." Not a bad philosophy to apply to many things in life...

*'A grateful parent'*

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# Simply Walk

## *Making the most of our area whilst walking - from a Simply Walk leader*

Has walking as a leisure activity ever been more important?! As a volunteer walk leader for 3 years, a Simply Walker for around 8 and a leisure walker of many years I'm pretty sure I've never enjoyed it as much. We have experienced an exceptionally beautiful spring with clear blue skies, vivid sunrises and sunsets, fresh bright colours and more wildlife visible than usual. The birdsong too has been incredible – without background noise their song is multi-layered and always joyous. I've never been more grateful to live in this wonderful area.

When the world is operating normally, Simply Walk Downley takes place on Monday and Thursday mornings. I would say our walkers come for three main reasons – obviously the healthy benefits of gentle exercise in the fresh air, the chit chat and social aspect (don't we miss that at the moment!) but also to discover more routes in our beautiful on-the-doorstep countryside.

I'm hoping that many of our walkers are enjoying retracing some of these routes but maybe others wish they'd paid a little more attention to where they were whilst walking and chatting! And other villagers have mentioned that they need to expand their walking routes. So I thought I'd try and suggest a few tips to help you explore more widely plus I and other Simply Walk leaders have added some of our favourite walk routes to the village website <http://www.downley.org/community/walks-from-downley> to help you too. We hope you will get additional enjoyment from these suggestions.

Gorgeous walking routes around Downley are very easy to discover – especially at the moment where even quiet paths are well trodden. Assuming all walks start from the centre of the village we have several different directions to head in – working clockwise, directions we can go are:

- Naphill & Coombe Lane fields;
- Hughenden Valley & Manor;
- Tinkers Woods (Little/Great Tinkers and Tinkers Shaw);
- Sands & Toweridge (rear of WW estate);
- West Wycombe;
- Cookshall farm, fields and woods

Walking from Downley to 2 adjacent areas and back again gives you numerous circular walks of around 3-5 miles taking 1 - 2 hours depending on your pace. Don't forget that walking the reverse way around the same route often gives a different outlook! We have only rewalked exactly the same route on a few occasions during lockdown despite walking most days.

Nearly all paths in our area are marked as permitted routes, and more importantly private areas are also clearly marked so you know you're avoiding livestock and not trespassing. Naphill woods has a myriad of confusing paths, but most are numbered on posts at intersections – if you take a photo of the board at the edge of the woods you can see where the paths lead. Dogs need to be on leads around Hughenden livestock and Cookshall areas in particular.

Just please remember that hills are inevitable around Downley - view them as a positive - exercise for healthy heart and the reason why we get such glorious vistas! Uneven ground is also common and when skies provide water the paths become slippery and often boggy – just choose your footwear carefully and put on a coat! It's amazing the positivity that comes from overcoming the elements.

I encourage as many of you as able to make the most of our beautiful countryside – I firmly believe connecting with it can benefit your physical and emotional health. If you need more encouragement the frequent walks have led to my husband and I both losing roughly a pound per week of lockdown .

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# Meaty Debate - A Different View

In the Spring edition of Downley News, the article “Meaty Debate” makes the point that much of the UK is best suited to pasture and that vegans and vegetarians don’t eat grass. This is true: about 65% of UK agricultural land is devoted to grazing, but much of the meat we produce is raised on feed. It also doesn’t mention the meat raised on land being cleared by deforestation in South America, and the devastating effect on the rainforest. Beef connected to this deforestation is imported and sold in the UK every year.

I’m neither an expert nor a vegan nor a vegetarian, but I am interested in the debate of meat-eating vs veganism/vegetarianism. Recently, I have taken over an allotment which, purely for my own interest and as an experiment, I am running with no animal inputs – a “Vegan Allotment”. To do this, I’ve undertaken research into veganism, land husbandry and crop production. My decision to run my Vegan Allotment was, in part, prompted by the recent major driver towards veganism: action to combat Climate Change. I’ll focus on what I know, from my research into the impact of meat farming, and ignore the morals, which I think are for individuals to decide.

Simplified, the scientific facts that back the idea of meat production being bad for the environment are that food fed to animals (eg grains and soy) could be more efficiently fed to humans. In fact, it would be about 10 times more efficient. Also, methane production is a huge issue. Estimates vary, but livestock are reckoned to be responsible for up to 14% of all greenhouse emissions from UK human activities. Even the windiest vegans are never going to compete with cows in a methane producing contest. Science is always moving forward: in New Zealand, microbiologists are attempting to reduce the amount of methane produced in cows’ stomachs, so it is possible that this will be less of an issue in the future.

Another point raised in the article “Meaty Debate” is that vegans and vegetarians are to blame for “vast monocultures of soya”. In fact, the biggest use of soy by far is animal feed. While soy is popularly associated with a variety of dairy-free and meat-free products (eg soy milk, soy cheese and tofu), the bulk of the world’s soy is not consumed by humans. Around 70% of the world’s soy is fed directly to livestock and only 6% is turned into human food. The rest is turned into soybean oil.

Other accusations often levelled at vegetarians and vegans are that they rely on imported food, flown to the UK. Avocados seem to be the chosen vegetable for those who want to criticise the vegan or vegetarian diet. I don’t dispute that some vegetarians eat too many avocados, but they are also consumed by meat-eaters and many people are now cutting back on their avocado consumption. A vegetarian or vegan diet is not dependent on the avocado. If the carbon footprint of food is the issue, then we need to educate meat-eaters, vegetarians and vegans, as to the environmental impact of the food they choose.

I am not writing to recommend any particular diet, but to dispel common myths about vegetarianism and veganism, and hopefully to make people question where and how our food is produced.

*Bob Craft*

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# Roadside Wreck in Downley

Did you know you can leave a car parked almost anywhere providing it has Tax, has a current MOT and is insured?

There are certain restricted areas where you shouldn't park as laid out in the highway code and other areas which are clearly marked and are usually regularly monitored.

Supposing a vehicle appears on the roadside outside your home, not causing an obstruction – well, it's allowed to be there.

After a few days one might inquire of neighbours as to the identity of the owner, or perhaps, whether the vehicle had been involved in a crime or has been abandoned.

What should you do? The easiest option is to ignore it and get on with your life.

What if a vehicle is left for a month or two? Nobody knows who owns it. It is taxed. It has a current MOT.

What can you do? What should you do? The long and short of it is again, nothing.

Our neighbourhood has such a vehicle, outside in the street, which has been resident here for a whole year. The tyres are flat. It is green from the algae growing in the wet weather. It has not moved. The MOT expired months ago. The vehicle has been untaxed for a month. Can we now get it removed? As a good citizen you should report it. Right? Who would be interested? The Council? The Police? DVLA?

The Council were mildly interested but after contacting the owner, who said it 'hasn't been abandoned', were powerless to act as the vehicle 'is not abandoned' and were sorry but closed the case with no further action.

The Police agreed that technically it is illegal but unless the vehicle is driven and witnessed by an officer, they have little power to pursue the case. This is despite the Police website indicating that a parked vehicle needs a current MOT and the owner could receive a £1000 fine. They suggest this sort of thing is left to the 'local council' who should have the necessary powers of removal.

DVLA take reports online or over the phone and, at first, appear interested. They assure us action will be taken as the nationwide advertising suggests. Tax it or lose it. Sadly, DVLA don't have a feedback system. You cannot be sure any action is being taken or that your report has actually reached them. The report is passed to a team who will visit your area and clamp the vehicle and then ultimately remove the vehicle if it remains untaxed. There is no timescale on any action they may take. In theory you can wait indefinitely for a result.

Everyone is interested but no one will actually take responsibility for getting the vehicle removed.

The owner may be prosecuted or not, and the vehicle may be moved or not. It seems a poor system for dealing with a relatively simple problem. Has the owner caused a nuisance or been anti-social? We would say yes, but it's only our neighbourhood that has to put up with it, not theirs!

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## Cryptic Bird Quiz Answers

1 Rook; 2 Spoonbill; 3 Kittiwake; 4 Blackcap; 5 Little Tern; 6 Yellow Hammer; 7 Swallow; 8 Pied Wagtail; 9 Ring Ouzel; 10 Kingfisher; 11 Oystercatcher; 12 Knot; 13 Red Kite; 14 Shelduck; 15 Gannet; 16 Razorbill; 17 Skylark; 18 Reed Bunting; 19 Crossbill; 20 Robin; 21 Merlin; 22 Hobby; 23 Nightingale; 24 Bittern; 25 Redpoll; 26 Sandpiper; 27 Dipper; 28 Wren; 29 Stonechat; 30 Puffin; 31 Nightjar; 32 Crow; 33 Storm Petrel

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### Website

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Any copy or photographs sent to this address may also be used on the downley.org website and facebook page: facebook.com/Downley.Community

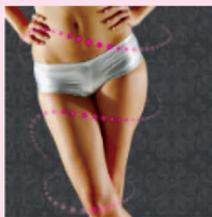
### Steering Committee

The Downley Communications Forum set up as part of the Community Plan, provides oversight to the Village News, the Village enews and the downley.org website.

<b>Chairman</b>	Bill Thompson
<b>Secretary</b>	Peter Loadman
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These are appalling and tragic times, my fellow villagers,  
 but as a friend of mine said:  
 'Downley is a wonderful place to grow old, everyone is so helpful'  
 Lorna Murray