

Correspondence – August 2022

1/8/22	OCC Rights of Way reporting	Overgrown trees on Quarry Lane
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Trees and hedges are boundary features which belong to the adjacent landowner. We are only responsible for the surface of the public right of way and any tree issues need to be addressed by them. Regards, Countryside Access Team

2/8/2022	Resident	Placement of bins
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Most mornings I go for a quick stroll on Nineacres and try and do my bit picking discarded plastic bottles etc.

The rubbish bin by the Community Centre is often overflowing.

But the one down on Nineacres Lane - near the bend, opposite No15 - is usually empty.

Is there any way that bin could be moved up onto the playing field itself?

People might then be encouraged to put their rubbish in it.

3/8/22	Neil Pakenham-Walsh	Letter to request permission for metal detection at Mill Field
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Dear Town Council,

I would like to ask your permission to search the Mill Field thoroughly over the next 6 months and report all finds to the Town Council so that they may be retained for the benefit of Charlbury.

About myself: I am a medical doctor working on global health issues. I rent the John Kibble Room at the Corner House, Charlbury, where I run a global health network called Healthcare Information for All (www.HIFA.org) in collaboration with the World Health Organization. I started the Corner House Community Bookshop, and continue to run the upstairs bookshop, raising money for the Corner House and Memorial Hall. My wife Valou Pakenham-Walsh is a former Charlbury town councillor (2008-2016). We live on Woodfield Drive, off Dancer's Hill.

Metal detecting: I've been a metal detecting hobbyist for 2 years and am grateful to several landowners in and around Charlbury for giving me permission to search their land. As a result I have found an early bronze age axehead (2100BC) near Lyneham, several Roman coins near Stonesfield, and five silver hammered coins. I have donated my best Charlbury finds to the Charlbury Museum, including an Elizabeth 1st silver penny, a George III love token, and a 16th century sword belt hanger, and I am keen to continue donating such objects.

I am diligent, responsible and tidy. Any holes that I dig are small and less than 8 inches deep. Each hole is made good and the turf carefully replaced. I remove and take away any rubbish I find such as aluminium cans and broken glass. I am a member of the National Council for Metal Detecting with whom I have public liability insurance.

For the Mill Field I would use a grid system to ensure full coverage of the site.

What happens to finds? I shall report all finds to the Town Council. As the landowner all finds belong to the Town Council and you are free to decide what to do with them. If I find any objects of historical interest to Charlbury I would be delighted for them to be donated to the Charlbury Museum. I would also be keen to register any objects more than 300 years old on the Portable Antiquities Scheme database, run by the British Museum and archaeologists working in collaboration with metal detectorists.

In the unlikely event that I find treasure (ie gold or silver artefacts more than 300 years old, or a hoard) this must by law be reported to the coroner and would typically result in an award split 50:50 between the landowner and the finder. Any financial reward that I receive would be donated to Healthcare Information for All.

Benefits to Charlbury

1. The main benefit to Charlbury is that we would recover objects of historical value to Charlbury and ensure they are brought under ownership and preserved as part of the Charlbury Museum collection.

2. I understand there has been recent and repeated unauthorised metal detecting on the Mill Field. This is likely to result in permanent loss of historical objects belonging to Charlbury. A thorough official search of the area would recover any remaining artefacts for the benefit of Charlbury. Once the search is completed, the area would be less attractive to rogue detectorists.

Thank you for your consideration. I'll be happy to answer any questions and look forward to your reply.

8/8/2022	Resident	Holiday let businesses in Charlbury
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I am a Charlbury resident since August 2020. You have probably seen my identical twin boys in the town with red and blue glasses and we have recently (10 years after the first two) had a third child who is eight weeks old.

I'm sure you have been approached many many times on the same subject, so apologies here is another one!

We have been trying to buy a house in Charlbury for two years, bidding on the few family sized houses that come up for sale. We have a very good budget, but I'm getting fed up losing purchases to professional holiday let businesses who have bigger relationships with the estate agents and are calculating their offers not as a home but as a business. This is not about the amount of money we are offering for a house (albeit for sure prices are raised competing with businesses).

The last example for us was Merchant House (Sheep Street) where we were one of two final bidders and the estate agent assured us we were bidding against a buyer of a similar profile (a family who were renting locally apparently). I imagined we offered more or less the same price. Post sale, I see that Merchant House is actually advertising itself as a full-time holiday let business. I suspect the same is true of the other two houses we bid on recently.

My question for you is - what is the town doing to stop the direction of travel of it becoming a full-time Airbnb type place, which as I'm sure you have seen elsewhere is not attractive at all? I think you have already seen that places like The Bull have dropped their standards and increased their prices as they don't need to cater to regular customers. At what point does Charlbury have too many holiday let businesses?

Does the Council have a strategy for attracting families to Charlbury? Does the Council have a strategy for controlling holiday let businesses? If so, could they be more vocal about it?

My suggestions would include:

1. Immediately introducing resident parking in the central part of Charlbury (Merchant House, Sheep Street is advertising itself as suitable for 12 adults who presumably have cars too? There are no spare parking spaces on Sheep Street as it is anyway.)
2. Also it would be a good idea if The Council were to announce that Charlbury is putting itself forward "as a town that will introduce a requirement for holiday lets to be licensed as soon as it is legally possible to do so, and that it will then ordinarily not approve holiday lets". As you know, Scotland has already done this. A forward announcement at least will put-off professional holiday let businesses from considering Charlbury in preference for other places.
3. It would also be useful to try to log how many full time holiday let businesses exist in Charlbury today.

Clearly I have my own agenda here to buy a family sized house in Charlbury but this is important for everyone living in Charlbury. Thank you for taking the time to read my message!

23/08/2022	Wild Oxfordshire	State of our rivers
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Dear Councillor,

The amount of sewage in the river Evenlode and connecting tributaries is alarming! Our latest water quality report from EarthWatch – Europe, showcases the impact of sewage pollution in our rivers and the importance of citizen science water quality monitoring (see attached). We need your help to increase awareness of this urgent issue with the aim to make water companies such as Thames Water upgrade the existing sewage treatment works. Attached is our press release that outlines the importance of citizen science research, as well as our Waterblitz flyer (please circulate this). We need councillors, MPs, and authorities to come together to advocate and implement upgrades to sewage treatment works to stop raw sewage being dumped into our rivers!

How you can help:

- Make a noise about it! Share the information as far as you can
- Get as many people as possible involved in the Waterblitz
- Write to your MP and Thames Water

SEWAGE DUMPED INTO THE RIVER RAY THIS WEEKEND!

"This weekend, Thames Water has wiped out around 95% of the fish in the River Ray near Swindon. That's the estimate from the Environment Agency no less. A main sewer ruptured on Friday pouring untreated sewage into a small tributary, then the Ray and finally the Upper Thames. Why? Because Thames Water is a company that has treated its customers and the environment with contempt. It has failed to invest in safety critical infrastructure with the result that this sewer main has broken, apparently for the third time recently. I have been involved in the water industry for 40 plus years and I am sick of this. You should be too. Make a fuss - work out your own way of doing it but make a fuss and make a big one.

Thames Water has prioritised profit over customers and the environment for far too long. Sarah Bentley their chief executive has said that 'all discharges of untreated sewage are unacceptable' Really Sarah? You could have fooled me!" Vaughan Lewis – ECP media contact vaughan@windrushaec.co.uk

Thank you for your time and attention,

Kind Regards,

Rhiannon

Rhiannon Evetts (Wild Oxfordshire)

ECP Communications Officer

16/08/2022	Angela Gwatkin & Brigid Avison	Once You Know screening
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Liz Reason suggested we write to you as we'd like to make a proposal to the Town Council to hold an event which we feel could be an effective means to engage the local community in recognising and adapting to the challenges of climate change and environmental degradation that we're already starting to face.

Our idea is to have a public screening of a recently launched documentary, *Once You Know*, by a young French filmmaker, Emmanuel Cappellin -- <https://pulp-films.fr/project/once-you-know/>. In the film, he looks directly at the various ways in which our current systems are causing harm and are no longer sustainable, and how we urgently need to create a more resilient system, particularly at the local level. Although it makes clear the scale of the disruption that we are facing, it has a positive message about how, by recognising this, communities can start to prepare and even find joy and satisfaction in creating new ways of living, working and playing together.

This film, together with a post-screening discussion, could be an effective way to widen the conversation about the rapidly developing climate and environmental crisis, to consider what impact this will have, and how we will all need to adapt. We think it would be best, and appropriately, supported and sponsored by the Town Council, as a community outreach event. As a first step to considering this, we'd like to invite members of the Town Council to a private screening which we're happy to organise, venue tbc depending on numbers.

We'd also like to suggest that, as well as showing the film, the event would include a post-screening facilitated discussion -- there is a guide with resources about this on the film's website <https://pulp-films.fr/project/once-you-know/>

The film lasts 104 minutes, so for the private screening with the councillors we suggest a meeting of around 2hrs 15mins to allow some time for discussion afterwards.

We look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes

Angela Gwatkin and Brigid Avison

24/08/2022	Resident	Dogs
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Not sure this is a town council matter, but if I may, I will start with you! Yesterday about 6pm I was walking back through the Mill Field and saw a man with three dogs, one old and two chasing each other so presumably younger. As I approached the gate to leave the field, the two of them raced up to me, one with teeth bared and barking, then he started trying to bite me from behind and made a small tear in my anorak. I like dogs, don't usually mind them jumping up, and have never had a problem with them, so the only reason I can think of is that I was carrying an umbrella and the dog saw it as a threat. The owner rather feebly called them off, but didn't put them on the lead so they carried on barking and jumping up. I said he should put them on a lead if they behaved like that because it would be dangerous for children. Apparently they don't go for children (?). The owner apologised, but it was unpleasant and when I told a neighbour she said she had become very wary of walking round here because, since Covid, many more people had acquired dogs and were not

training them properly. This is not serious enough for police, but maybe the Council could put up a reminder notice or something to say that if there is any indication of a problem, the dog should be put on a lead? If this is not the sort of thing you deal with, do you have any other suggestions? Best wishes, Valerie

30/08/2022	Ticknell Piece resident	Bowls club fence
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I was wondering if you could help me, I have spoken West Oxfordshire County Council, who suggested getting in contact with yourself in regards to the land by the bowls club in Charlbury, our back garden backs onto the land by the bowls club and we wanted to find who it belonged to as we would like to redo the fence at the back and there is a lot of brambles on the other side we would like to cut down as well as straightening the fence as we have a cut out due to a tree being there previously which has now been cut down so we are hoping it's okay to straighten the fence if possible, I would appreciate your advice on this,

Kind regards

Natalie