

South Oxford Community Association

NEWSLETTER

June 2020

Message from Bob Price, chair of the Community Centre Management Committee

Dear Residents,

The good news is that we very much hope to be able to re-open the Centre from July 6th on a 'social distancing' basis. We have invited all the user groups to let us know if they are able to come back on that basis and to let us have their proposals for how they would operate and manage the continuing risks to health. They will let their members know what plans they have by posting on Facebook, the SOCC Website, or the Notice Boards outside the building. I'd like to thank Debby Forbes for juggling furlough and work periods to keep the admin under control, and Sarah for volunteering for the wonderful Virtual Café.

We have a small and friendly management committee – we're always looking for new members, so please contact me if you'd like to get involved, on prices43@btinternet.com

Good wishes – and keep safe.

The Community Centre has been closed since the Lockdown Regulations on 26 March, but thanks to the resilience and positive action by many members of the community, activities have continued. This Newsletter brings you news from some of the groups who have found alternative ways to thrive.

During the closed period we have been scouring the swift boxes for signs of tenancy, and we have audited the building's energy consumption to discover how we can reduce our carbon footprint. The audit was funded by a grant from Westmill Solar Co-operative, delivered by the Environmental Information Exchange (EiE) at Oxford Brookes University, and facilitated by the Oxford Low Carbon Hub, so it's been a real team effort. We will be acting on their recommendations as soon as we settle into the new normal.

We are happy to report that amongst the first returners to the building as lockdown eases is Joby Wilson's martial arts group. He has transferred from online classes to the courtyard, working with small groups at weather-permitting weekends.

Invitation to Contribute to South Oxford Community Pandemic Diary

We'd like to build up a resource to share and document the experience of Lockdown, difficult or rewarding, as it has affected members of the community in South Oxford. We plan to host this

on the SOCC website. If you'd like to contribute, please send your response to equiries@southoxford.org, marked 'Pandemic Diary'. Your response might take the form of a photo, drawing, memory, quote, favourite recipe, song or walk, experience, or account of activities completed during lockdown and as we begin to emerge from it. If your response includes other identified people, whether in a photo or in written form, please get their permission before sending it in. We look forward to receiving and sharing your contributions.



The end of the day

News from South Oxford Virtual Zoom Café

by Sarah Korting

'a lovely moment of connection in a disconnected time'

Keeping busy in lockdown while furloughed from my job at the Community Centre, I have been running a community cafe online via zoom. We have held 8 so far, engaging people across our community from our eldest 85 to our youngest community baby at 3 months. With the help of volunteer hosts, Catherine Morey and now Rosa Lucia, and delicious cakes baked by our wonderful baker Siddo Diva, we have enjoyed music ranging from nursery rhymes, to Beryl's rendition of 'We'll meet again', the Pirrie family band, and Ed Bressan's Italian socialist anthems. Cakes and books to swap delivered safely to the door, we have been able to overcome lockdown isolation, check in on each other and have some socially distanced fun until we are able to meet again face to face as things open up.

Café visitors have plenty to say about their real and virtual experiences: 'It's been great being able to connect and share experiences with locals via the community cafe. Lockdown has been tricky but it's always nice to see a friendly face, oh and the cakes are delicious!' (from Tim Doubleday, his partner and their new baby who have just joined the café). 'That's lovely Sarah. You have kept people going & Siddo is amazeballs too'. Gill Wells says, 'whilst it's not quite the same as meeting face to face, we really look forward to seeing everyone on Tuesday afternoons - and we especially look forward to the amazing cakes!' We're sure Anna FS speaks for all when she says, 'thanks to Sarah's efforts, the Zoom Café is a lovely moment of connection in a disconnected time.'



South Oxford Virtual Zoom Café

A Round-Up of Visual Arts News

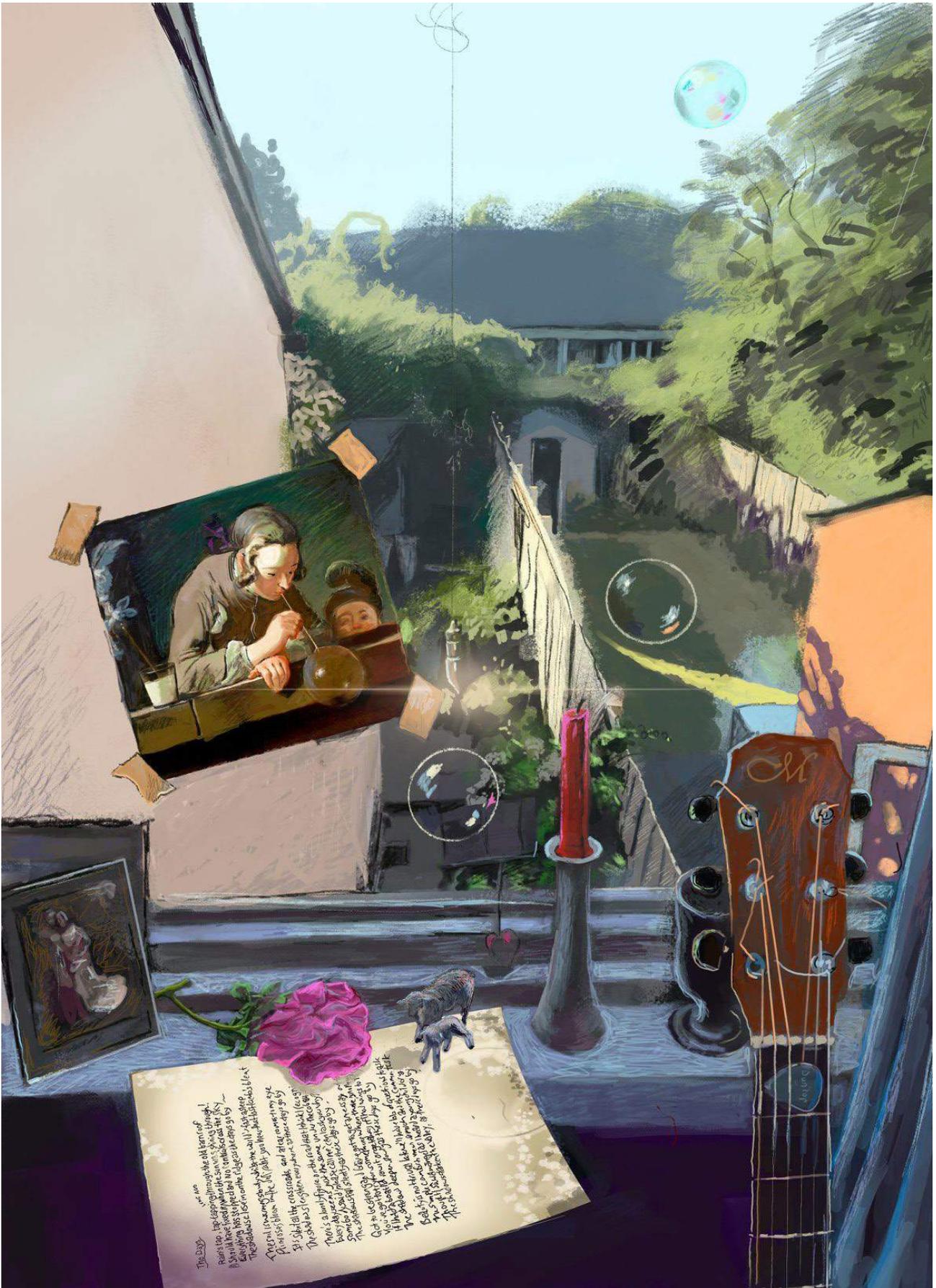
by Martin Beek

Whilst Oxford Artweeks at the Centre did not happen, some members contributed to the online festival. It is very much hoped that we shall stage some sort of show of Artworks Artists at the centre in late autumn until Christmas. It has been a difficult time for those professionally engaged in art and who rely upon sales as part of their income. On a positive note SOCA New Hinksey Arts have been doing ZOOM life drawing sessions coordinated by regular artist Felicity Cormack. These take place on a Wednesday morning. It is very much hoped that further online arts events can take place before a return to the physical space. Likewise, the Artweeks Party previously scheduled for last month is hoped to take place in midsummer; various artists have discussed the possibilities of 'distanced drawing sessions' in the courtyard or park. At the moment we are hoping that the George Bissell exhibition will eventually take place in September. As a centre we are committed to exploring how this may happen and how the public will have safe access to it. I'm pleased to report that many of the artists have been working on their own projects during lockdown and exploring new channels for creativity including sessions on Zoom, art talks and social media platforms.

The Poetry Group

Hannah from The Poetry Group reports that they are staying in touch online via email chat, sharing poems on a chosen theme and discussing them together, and some of us Zoom as well. It's lovely to keep in touch in a new way once a fortnight as usual. Looking forward to sharing some poems and chat together soon!





Lockdown View by Martin Beek

Hinksey Sculling School

by Bodo Schulenberg, Director of Rowing

Like many other organisations in a similar boat, the Hinksey Sculling School has been operating online throughout the lockdown – a somewhat unusual environment for a rowing programme but we are determined to come out of this crisis stronger as a club. Adjusting to new realities, we handed out rowing machines to our members to enable remote training from home. Our wonderful coaching team is running zoom sessions twice a day to keep our young rowers in good physical and mental shape. Unfortunately our rowing regatta season was cancelled altogether due to COVID-19, which is a huge disappointment to our young athletes, in particular those who were in promising positions to qualify for the Junior National Team this year – which would have been a first for our charity but a feat we are hoping to repeat regularly from here on out.

We are deeply grateful to the Oxfordshire Community Foundation and to British Rowing for helping us steer our ship through these difficult times. Now that the lockdown restrictions have been lifted slightly, we have jumped at the opportunity to be able to row again on Hinksey Lake and the Radley stretch of the river Thames. If anyone from our community would like to have a go at rowing, we are running Learn-To-Row courses at Hinksey Lake for 11-18 year-olds continuously throughout summer from mid-July until the end of August. Adults no longer have to miss out either – we are looking to expand our Community Rowing Club, which trains at the Community Centre three times a week. To find out more, email Bodo at directorofrowing@hinkseysculling.org.uk.



South Oxford Women's Institute (SOWI)

South Oxford Women's Institute (SOWI) is working on virtual solutions to help our members stay connected and welcomes any new members who would like to join us! Our contact details are on our webpage: <https://wixsy1.wixsite.com/southoxfordwi>

The Farmers' Market

The Farmers' Market relocated to the Splash Park in Hinksey Park to continue trading on Sunday mornings throughout the period. More information can be found in their weekly newsflash: email info@southoxfordfarmersmarket.org.uk to register.

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